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The + Glorious

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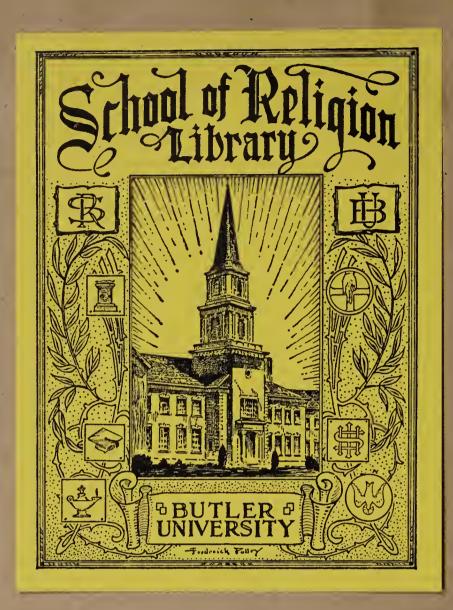
by

ELDER W. S. CRAIG



Cozad, Nebraska





AN ABRIDGMENT OF

ELDER ABRAHAM BOOTH'S

"REIGN OF GRACE."

WITH ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS

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ELDER W. S. CRAIG

COZAD, NEB.

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"O sad State

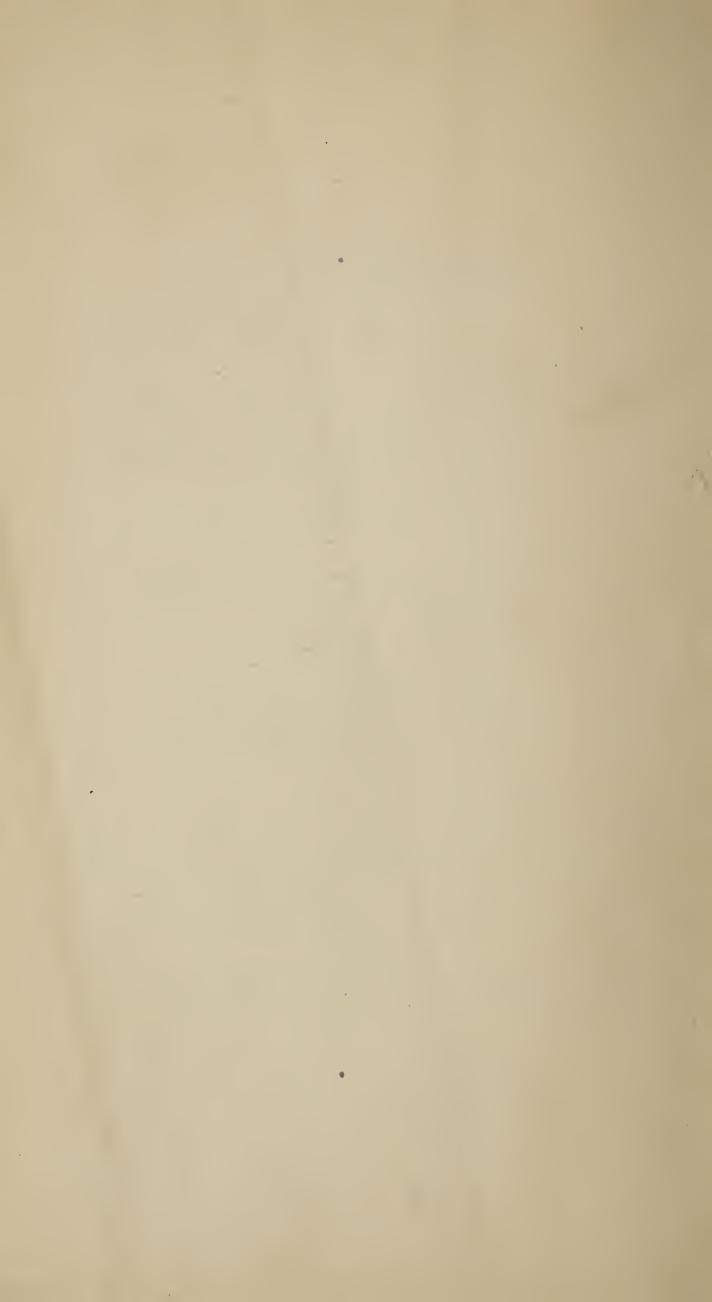
Of human wretchedness! so weak is man, So ignorant and so blind, that did not God Sometimes withold in mercy what we ask, We would be ruined at our own request."

-Hannah Moore.

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PREFACE.

MAKE no apology (except to the worthy name of Elder Booth,) for the following treatise. If the truth is taught, we have nothing to fear from the frowns of men. If error is taught, the most labored apology would not justify our conduct.

Elder Abraham Booth (1734–1806) was an English Baptist minister of rare abilities. He, having "tasted that the Lord is gracious," by grace was enabled to declare the wonders of that grace to the glory of God and comfort of sinners.

I design to write a small treatise that can circulate among the "poor in spirit," be they rich or poor in earthly possessions. With this end in view, I have freely abridged and modified the original work, which contains 335 12 mo. pages; also some additions have been made, and for these I alone am responsible. I trust that the reader will deem this a sufficent apology for the liberties I have taken with Elder Booth's book.

I well know this book will be spurned by the proud and worldly wise. But I seek not the praise of men; so do not write to feed his vanity. To God alone am I responsible, and to Him must I give an account of my stewardship. I only desire to write in that way and manner that will honor and praise the "God of all grace," and edify and "comfort all who mourn.

INTRODUCTION.

THE gospel of God's Sovereign Grace is a doctrine truly divine, and has ever been the object of the world's contempt. It was a stumbling-block to the Jew, and foolishness to the wise Greek. Paul, who was a resolute preacher of grace, found this so by repeated experience. The religious devotees of his day were the first to oppose his doctrine. The polite, the learned, and the religious, all agreed to load his doctrine and character with foulest reproaches. All the early preachers shared in this. The plainer the truth was told, the worse the world hated the preacher. Their enemies boldly affirmed that they said, "Let us do evil that good may come." Their labors and doctrine were impeached, as hateful to God, and destructive to man.

What were the grounds for this charge? They had more regard for practical religion and true morality than their objectors. They often mentioned good works, and pressed the performance of them for various and important purposes, both in the sight of God and man. Now, the true reason why they were hated was because their doctrine was not in the least adapted to glorify the pride of man. They taught that, without the atonement made by the Son of God on the cross, the state of even the best men would have been desperate. And they freely declared that the state of all men (even the most respected,) was dreadfully evil. So they preached a perfect Savior, and a finished righteousness, through Christ's obedience, to sinners, even the most worthless and vile. preached but one way of a sinner's acceptance with God, and his justification before Him, and that was entirely of grace, through the perfect work of Christ, alone. In their doctrine, grace shines, triumphs, and reigns most gloriously. All man's

merits are laid aside, for all are guilty criminals, and not even one is in any way entitled to the least of God's favors. At this the devout Pharisee and legal moralist are highly offended. Such doctrines being considered by them so hateful and licentious, they feel to stand up for what they call a holy life and good works to secure acceptance with God, and thus do more in talking about their necessities than in performing them. A doctrine that casts all man's works and merits aside, in this matter, is supposed to open the flood-gates of iniquity. For they suppose that everything bad may be expected from those who openly disavow any and all dependence for salvation on their own duties, and simply trust in "the God of all grace" for such a precious gift.

The gospel reveals the "righteousness of God," not the righteousness of the sinner, and this is why it is so hateful to the public taste and insulting to the sons of pride. The principal designs of the gospel are to mortify the pride of man, and to display the glory of grace; to set forth the mighty power of God, and the weakness of man; to praise God and to edify and comfort the truly penitent with the joyful news of salvation, through Jesus Christ. It throws all human excellence down in the dust, and elevates the needy and wretched. It shows that everything that exalts itself against God is an abomination in His sight, and He who is despised of man and abhorred by the nations, is Jehova's eternal delight; Is., 49, 7.

The grace declared through the gospel is a very independent and unceremonious thing. It pays no previous regard to the learned, wise, ignorant, self-sufficient, moralist, king, slave, poor, rich, refined, and virtuous, or infamous prostitute. They all stand on the same level, in the matter of salvation, so far as their merits are concerned. Its business is only with those whom the Spirit has taught to know their depravity and sinfulness of heart, "those that mourn," the worthless, and miserable, whomsoever they be. It is always friendly to the broken-hearted and contrite-spirited, (Ps., 34, 18.) and rejoices to do them good. It raises the poor from the dust, and the needy from the dunghill; I Sam., 2, 8; Ps., 113, 7. It raises them from their degeneration, and exhorts them to "go and sin no more." But the self-righteous of every rank are always treated with contempt. The hungry are filled with good

things, but the rich are sent empty away. (Luke, 1, 53.)

Men have made many attempts to obviate "the offense of the cross," but in every case the truth has suffered. All lovers of sacred truth should let grace stand on its own merits and not tamper with it.

But however much the doctrine of grace may be despised by those who do not feel their need of mercy, it will always be revered and praised by "the poor in spirit." By it they see an honorable way to escape from the "wrath to come," which they know they so justly deserve. To the sensible sinner, therefore, it must always be a "joyful sound." It is the grandest incentive to good works, which we expect to show in this treatise.

Using Romans, 5, 21 as a text, we proceed to give some thoughts concerning that grace which reigns so gloriously; a full display of same, being a work infinitely too high for mortals to perform. But we have endeavored to embody as much of the truth as we well could in such a short work as this is.

THE REIGN OF GRACE, FROM ITS RISE TO ITS CONSUMATION.

CHAPTER I.

THE SIGNIFICATION OF THE TERM GRACE.

That we may proceed with clearness and certainty, it is very necessary to consider carefully what is implied in the term, Grace. The primary and principal sense of the word is free favor, unmerited kindness. This is its plain meaning in the Scriptures, and thus it is to be understood in our text. Grace in the writings of Paul stands in direct opposition to all works and worthiness of every kind and of every degree. This is plain from the following: "Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reconed of grace, but of debt." "Therefore, it is of faith that it might be by grace." "For by grace are ye saved, * * * not of works, least any man should boast." "Who hath saved us, * * * not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace." As the word "mercy" is only correctly used in relation to some creature actually in a suffering state, or exposed to it; so "grace," in its true and proper sense, always pre-supposes a similar state, and also unworthiness in its object. So, whenever anything valuable is given, by the merciful God,

to any of Adam's apostate offspring, it can not be of grace any further than the recipients are considered unworthy. For so far as worthiness appears grace ceases and equality takes its place. Grace and worthiness, therefore, can not be connected together in the same act for the same end. The one must necessarily give place to the other, according to that remarkable text: "If by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." The apostle plainly argues that whatever is of works is not of grace at all, and whatever is of grace is not of works in any degree. Grace and works are as opposite as light and darkness. So when he represents salvation as flowing from divine grace, we are not only forced to conclude that the recipients have no claim upon God for such a grand blessing, but they deserve quite the reverse, and are justly exposed to eternal ruin.

Grace, then, may be correctly defined as being the eternal (Jer. 31, 3) and absolutely free and unmerited favor or mercy of God, manifested in spiritual and eternal blessings to the guilty and unworthy. It is divinely free, infinitely rich, entirely detached from all suppositions of human worth and opperating independently of all conditions performed by man. Grace shines through the whole. It is the source of all those inestimable blessings which the Lord bestows upon His unworthy creatures. And He should be given all the praise, honor, and glory; for all is "to the praise of the glory of His grace."

In the following pages, we shall try to declare some of those wonderful blessings of grace. But from what has been said, we may learn that if grace in its own nature and as it is experienced in our salvation be directly opposite to all works and worthiness, then those persons are awfully deceived, who seek to join them together in the same matter, and for the same end; because it is plain that works and merits connected together destroys all correct ideas of grace. However high their pretenses may be to holiness, it is plain from the word of God, that they are in that broad road and traveling to ruin; except that very grace prevent, of which they have such incorrect ideas. For divine grace disdains to be arrested in the performance of that work which peculiarly belongs to itself, by the poor and imperfect performances of man. All attempts to complete what grace begins betrays our pride, displeases the Lord, and can not promote our spiritual interests.

CHAPTER II.

GRACE AS IT REIGNS IN OUR SALVATION IN GENERAL.

Grace in our text is compared to a sovereign. Now a sovereign, considered as such, is invested with regal power and the highest authority-possesses infinite power and absolute liberty of action. Grace, therefore, in her beneficent government, must exert and manifest sovereign authority; or she can not bring the sinner to life eternal and conquer all his foes. For sin, his great enemy, is compared to a sovereign, whose reign, according to our text, ends in death. As sin appears clothed with horrid deformity, armed with destructive power, inflicting temporal death and menacing eternal flames; so Grace appears on the throne, arrayed in the beauties of holiness, smiling with divine benevolence and with feelings of tenderest compassion, and armed with all the magnificence of invincible power, fully determined to exert her authority and tender compassion, under the conduct of infinite wisdom, to the everlasting honor of inflexible justice, inviolable veracity and every divine perfection, by rescuing the condemned offender from the jaws of destruction, by speaking peace to the alarmed sinners, filling their hearts with love and gratitude, and finally bringing them safe to everlasting honor and joy. In a word, the heart of this mighty sovereign is compassion itself, her looks love, her language balm to the bleeding souls and her arm salvation. Those who are delivered by such a sovereign must enjoy a full and complete salvation.

Divine Grace, as reigning in our salvation, not only appears, but appears with majesty; not only shines, but triumphs, providing all things, freely bestowing all things necessary to our eternal happi-Grace does not set our salvation on foot by accommodating its terms and conditions to the enfeebled capacities of sinful man, but begins, carries on and completes the arduous work itself, alone. Grace as a sovereign does not rescue the sinner from deserved ruin, furnish him with new abilities, then leave him by their use to resist the tempter, mortify his lusts, attain those holy qualities and perform those righteous acts, which render him fit for eternal happiness and give him a title to it. No, for if the providence and work of grace were thus circumscribed, things of the greatest importance to the glory of God and the felicity of man would be left in the most uncertain and perilous situation. admitting the possibility of any sinner being saved in such a way, there would be ample scope for the exertions of spiritual pride and very much room for boasting. Such would be dishonoring to God and His grace. Grace not only lays the foundation, but rears the building; not only settles the preliminaries, but executes the very business itself. The Pharisee (Luke xviii) made his acknowledgements to assisting grace; for "God, I thank thee," was his language. It is evident, however, that his views of grace were very contracted, and his hopes arising therefrom very deceitful. Would we then view

grace as reigning, we must consider it as the "Alpha and Omega" of our salvation; that the unrivaled honor of that greatest of all works may be given to "the God of all grace." Such grace. is worthy of God, and is the only thing that can reach down to the sinner's case.

Grace was never intended as an auxiliary to help the weak, but well disposed, to save themselves. It was never designed to assist and reward the good, but to relieve the miserable and save the desperate. It is for sinners, that grace has erected her throne. This forbids despair. The inconceivably perfect obedience and infinitely meritorious death of the "Son of God" and the "blood of the Lamb" forms its mighty basis. By such a powerful sovereign the most various, multiplied and pressing wants may be relieved with the utmost ease.

Remember, poor disconsolate soul, that your unworthiness and guilt are no bars to your coming to Christ; for the sinful and unworthy are the only persons with whom grace is at all concerned. Well might the poet sing,

"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me!"

Ho! all ye children of want and sons of wretchedness! "every one that thirsteth!" "all ye that labor and are heavy laden!" hither ye may come with the utmost freedom. Be it known unto you; be it never forgotten by you, that Jehovah considered your awfully indigent condition and designed your complete relief, when He erected this wonderful throne. Yes, thine it is, O Sovereign Grace! to raise the poor and needy out of the dust and the beggar from the dunghill, and set them on thrones of glory among the princes of heaven.

CHAPTER III.

GRACE AS IT REIGNS IN ELECTION.

Among the various blessings which flow from sovereign goodness and are dispersed by reigning grace, that of election deservedly claims our first notice. It was in the decree of election that the grace of our infinite Sovereign did first appear, in choosing Christ, as the head, and in Him, as His members, all that shall ever be saved. Election, therefore, (which is founded upon God's eternal love, as a moving cause,) is the first link in the golden chain of our salvation, and the corner-stone of that amazing fabric of redemption. We confidently affirm that, because of man's awful condition in sin, there would be no salvation without election; or which is the same thing, God's previous determination to "save His people from their sins," through Jesus Christ.

"The God of all grace" is the Creator, Supporter and Governor of all worlds and everything connected therewith. His own praise, honor and glory were designed in his imparting existence to all things. The loftiest seraph that surrounds His dazzling throne above, and the meanest insect that crawls in the dust below, have the same original Creator, and are designed in various ways to praise His wonderful attributes. To deny this, or to suppose that

God did not act from the most worthy purposes, would be highly derogatory to the dignity of Him

who controls all things.

Nobly conspicuous among the various orders of animate and inanimate existence in this lower creation was man, when first formed and fresh from the hands of his Maker. Man, therefore, as bearing his Maker's image, was designed, in a peculiar manner, to answer God's purposes in his creation. Nor did the entrance of sin thwart his grand designs, but was made subservient thereto. It was absolutely impossible that any event could arise that would bring confusion into that stupendous plan of divine operation, which infinite wisdom had laid. For "known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." All that is comprehended, in what men call contingent, is absolute certainty with "Him who is perfect in knowledge." The entrance of sin therefore among moral beings, whether angels or men, could not possibly frustrate Jehovah's purposes, or render His original designs abortive. For the counsel of the Lord shall stand and He will do all His pleasure; Isa., xlvi, 10. The entrance of sin was an awfully sad and ruinous event, its "wages" being "death," which is the sadest word in our language; yet it appears plain from the Scriptures that, He who "declared the end from the beginning," not only foresaw it, but from eternity determined to overrule it in such a way as to promote His perfections and His glory. His determination was to glorify Himself in the complete salvation of some and the righteous condemnation of others; so that a revenue of glory shall arise to Him in all his works. Glory shall arise as well from punishing the haughty

Egyptian monarch who said, "Who is Jehovah that I should obey Him?" as from blessing the king of Israel, who was "a man after God's own heart." As well from condemning the traitorous Judas, who sold his Master's blood, as from glorifying faithful Paul, who counted not his very life dear, so that he might promote the Savior's honor. These shall be the monuments of sovereign grace; those of righteous vengance, and both for the glory of God to all eternity.

Now as Jehovah is an absolute sovereign, He has the most perfect liberty and right to dispose of His offending creatures, in whatever way he pleases, for his own glory and praise. To dispute this is to deny His sovereignty and, with Pharoah, renounce His dominion. But that sovereign Being who created all things for His own glory, (Rev. iv, 16) having an absolute right "to do what He will with His own," having determined to create man and to leave him to the freedom of his own will, forseeing that he would certainly fall, of His own free, distinguishing and éternal love, "chose a certain and definite number" in Christ before the world began," and ordained them to life and glory. The subjects of this gracious choice only existed in the foreknowledge and purposes of God; for anything does not need to really exist in order for him to choose it. But "in Thy book all'my [Christ's] members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." By Adam's fall they were involved in the common wreck of mankind, hence are saved out of his apostate race. This "election of grace" constitutes sinners, "sheep," the "beloved," "the bride, the Lamb's wife," and includes all that shall be saved. This is election, and this doctrine of God's distinguishing grace is now very much devided and denied by our rational and polite divines. It is not deemed worthy of serious notice by the wise and popular preachers of to-day, except to hold it up to ridicule; although all the leaders of the Reformation from Popery, and very many eminent men for piety, believed and strongly advocated election; now it is cashiered as a doctrine abhorrent to reason and sound sense, and at war with the moral perfections of God. It is declared to be an enemy of practical piety, and highly injurious to the comfort and hope of man. This being the case, we need not wonder that it is now become quite unfashionable, and that the leaders of the Reformation stand, to-day, condemned as heretics, in their own churches.

Now the true reason of this contemptous outcry is that election lays the ax at the root of all man's boasting moral excellence. It demolishes every subterfuge of human pride; for it leaves not the least shadow of a difference between one man and another (considered in themselves) why God should regard and save this person rather than that one. teaches all who embrace it to rest in that wonderful declaration, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight:" resolving the whole into divine grace and divine sovereignty. It pays not the least compliment to the learning, sagacity or character of any who dare to arraign divine conduct; but bluntly repels their insolence with "Nay, but O man! Who art thou that repliest against God?" It further teaches, that as unmerited and sovereign kindness began the work of salvation, so the same grace must carry it on to completion. While the Most High, ever jealous of his own honor, is determined to have all the glory and praise. The few votaries of this unpopular doctrine must expect reproach and ridicule, if not something more severe, from the uncircumcised in spirit and heart. Also, I have no doubt but that many of God's people, who are "weak in faith," have been taught by false teachers to despise this doctrine.

Those, who in the Scriptures are called the "Elect," are plainly a people distinguished from others. And that all mankind are not included under this head is obvious from the plain meaning of the term. To elect is to choose, and where any be chosen, others must be left out; for all are not chosen. The following plainly illustrates this: speak not of you all." "I have chosen you out of the "The election obtained it, and the rest were blinded." They are described as having their names "written in heaven," and in the "Book of Life," and "chosen to salvation," and saved "according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Well might Paul ask, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"

I think it plain that such persons, as are described, are not nations, communities, or officers of any sort, but, that they are particular persons, distinguished from others, and whose names are in a peculiar manner known to God, and that their election relates to spiritual blessings and eternal happiness, and the objects of it are dear to Him and forever precious in his sight. Jehovah designed from the beginning to manifest His love in the salvation of sinners. The damnation, inflicted on many, should

put it beyond doubt that this design to save extended only to some; for all are not saved, and the Divine purpose can not be rendered void. This salvation was to be wrought by the Son, in the character of a Mediator and Surety. As a Mediator and Substitute, He was to obey, bleed, and die under a charge of the blackest guilt and heaviest curse. (II Cor., 5, 21; Gal., 3, 13.) It was necessary, therefore, to determine how many, and who in particular, should be saved by Him. Their persons, situations and wants must be known and distinguished from others, for it is absurd to suppose that the Son would suffer, bleed and die for persons unknown, or for those who would not be benefited by His sacrifice; for there is no failure in His work, or uncertainty and ignorance with Him concerning it. In order that any should believe, it was necessary for God to purpose it and then bring it to pass; for faith and belief are His gift and work. Those who are "ordained to eternal life" will certainly believe in His own time, and no others ever can. True belief is evidence of "eternal life," not the procuring cause. As it was determined that Christ should die, so the persons to be benefitted by His death were chosen for that purpose. The death of Christ and the salvation of His people are matters alike of pre-arrangement and certainty. All those who were to be benefitted by His undertaking were "chosen in Him," and consigned to "that great Shepherd of the sheep," as His peculiar charge.

And as this election was one of the first effects of divine love, which was from "everlasting," it was therefore eternal. It is surely dishonoring to our Savior to suppose that He should engage as a

Mediator, act as a substitute and pour out His precious blood for, He did not know whom; or that the counsels of heaven should terminate in mere peradventures. Eternity was the date of such a wonderful resolution, as the salvation of sinners, in the eternal mind. Thus we read: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." "He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." They were chosen in Christ as their Head and Representative, and so constitute one mystical body—He the Head and they the members.

Prior to the foundation of the world, duration was eternity. The commencement of time and of created existence bears the same date. Paul in speaking of man's redemption, as formed in the mind of God, calls it "the Eternal Purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Therefore election is as old as God's purpose to save sinners through Christ.

But is there any reason assignable, in any way, why the elect were chosen to life and glory, while others, equally as good by nature, were passed by and left in their sins to perish under the stroke of Divine justice? None, whatever, in the creature; for all mankind, considered in themselves, are "guilty before God," occupying the position of criminals, and "by nature children of wrath." Paul, speaking of those "whose damnation is just," when writing to the "beloved of God, called to be saints;" asks, "Are we better than they?" and answers, "No, in no wise," etc; Rom. iii, 9.

Yet there is a reason with God; but how heavy it weighs on man's pride and vanity, when He declares the reason: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." And in this Christ perfectly ac-

quiesced by saying, "Even so Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." In this, also, the penetrating judgment of Paul, who was "caught up to the third heaven," rested completely satisfied; Rom. ix, 15. And we all ought to rest in the same reason for such divine procedure, without a murmur. Nor can we rebel against the sovereign discriminations of the Most High, without incurring flagrant guilt. And if we are reconciled to His will, we will not dare to do anything of this kind.

Grace reigns in the choice of all the elect and, as a sovereign, rejects all claims upon her. She never affords her smiles because any are worthy of being chosen.

The chosen of God are the sheep of Christ, and none but His sheep believe on Him, according to His own declaration: "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." Believing does not make any His sheep, but true faith proves that they are His sheep. Only those "ordained to eternal life believed," records the apostle, and thus it will always be. God "hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to [or in consideration of] our works, [whether past, present or future] but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." If, then, we are not called and saved according to our works, or worthiness, but according to the everlasting purpose and free distinguishing grace of Him who "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will;" much less is it to be supposed that we were chosen because of them, or in foresight of them. Faith and good works occupy a middle position in the work of grace, and while they are connected with election, they are not the cause. Election depends upon the mere good pleasure and mercy of God, without anything in us to influence His will. The Bible assignes no other cause, when declaring this doctrine: "Having predestinated us according to the good pleasure of His will." "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." "Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy." Our Savior joyfully exclaims, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemeth good in Thy sight." That revelation, which is here designed, is no other than the execution of that divine purpose in election. Paul illustrates this doctrine by Jacob and Esau. God loved Jacob and hated Esau before they were "born," or had "done any good or evil." Well might such procedure be termed a wonder, since no man canexplain any farther than "that the purpose of God" according to election might stand, not of works, but Him that calleth." Paul contrasts grace and works by such strong reasoning, that he abundantly proves that they can not be connected together in election, in a causative sense.

Many claim to believe the doctrine of election, for they know that such language and terms are quite often used in the Bible. But, when they come to explain their views, it is plain that they do not believe in election at all; for they believe in what they call election, which is founded upon works, conditions or some merits in the sinner. This destroys all correct ideas of grace and founds election upon

the abilities exercised by the sinner, which would be an act of remunerative justice, instead of the sovereign pleasure and mercy of God. Any attempt at a coalition between works and grace will only manifest our pride, ignorance of and enmity against the real truth. All objections against unconditional election are leveled against the sovereignity of God and, therefore, should make anyone tremble, "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power [authority and dominion] over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel to honor and another to dishonor?" "None can deny this. Neither ought any to deny the same right to God; for we are "as the clay in the potter's hand." "What if God willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction," who by their own wickedness and rebellion against Him fill up their own cup of iniquity? And if He should, in the end, pour out his vengeance upon them, who should pronounce His conduct unjust?" And that He might make known the riches of His glory, on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory." God determined to manifest infinite love and mercy in their complete deliverance from deserved destruction. Who has a right to complain? Has not God a sovereign right to do as "He will with His own?"

God's sovereignty is strikingly shown by delivering the angels who "sinned into chains of darkness" with no provisions of redemption, while redemption was provided for fallen man, who occupied a much lower place by creation, and so much less worthy in this respect. Yet, all His acts are governed by infinite wisdom. The supreme perfections of Jehovah's attributes forbids our supposing that He can decree without wisdom, any more than govern without rectitude or punish without justice. Wisdom appears in all His works and ways. Hence the apostle, discoursing on that deep subject of eternal predestination, concludes thus: "O the depths of the wisdom and knowledge of God."

When we consider the Almighty as choosing any of the fallen race to glory, we behold Him exercising the mercy of a compassionate Creator to His sinful creatures. And when we consider Him as choosing this person rather than that one, when both are wretched criminals and deserve to perish, we view Him as a Sovereign Lord and sole dispenser of His own favors. In reply to, "Why are any saved, when all deserve to perish?" we reply, Because our Lord is merciful.

The final end of election is God's own eternal glory and praise — "To the praise of the glory of His grace." This is the cause of the eternal counsels and divine operations; and subordinate to it is the complete happiness of all the chosen people. Does He choose to "make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy?" this is to display His wonderful grace. Does He see fit to "shew His wrath and to make His power [and longsuffering] known [against] the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" this is to display His eternal justice and hatred of sin.

The purpose of God in election is absolutely "immutable" and infallibly connected with the eternal felicity of all the elect. This is plain from

the following: "The Lord of Hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it?" "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." "He is of one mind, and who can turn Him? and what His soul desireth, even that he doeth." "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, [or purpose,] confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie," etc. "That the purpose of God according to election might stand." "With Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Nor can wesuppose that God should alter His purpose at all; for if He were to change His mind, it must either be for the better or worse. If for the better, He was not perfectly wise in His former purpose; if for for the worse, He is not wise in His present resolve. There can be no change without a reflection on His wisdom in some way. "The only wise God" has nooccasion for second thoughts. He is wise to perfection, boundless in power and makes no mistakes. or failures in anything. Election makes the salvation of all the elect absolutely certain; for "if God be for us, who can be against us?"

This doctrine is full of "strong consolation" and "comfort to all God's people, when rightly understood. It is a doctrine "according to godliness" and "love;" although it "be slanderously reported" otherwise. Humility, love and gratitude are the vitals of real religion. As these abound in the heart, our spiritual joys are increased and our Maker is glorified. As these abate, the interests of true religion decline. When these have no existence, the most extensive round of duties, the most

costly and shining performances, are of no esteem in the sight of God. This doctrine is especially adapted to promote genuine humility; for as all mankind are "by nature the children of wrath," without that grace which reigns in election, their condition is desperate. And it allows not the least grounds for any to claim superior worth or merits, or in anywise to glory above another. When self-admiring thoughts arise in the Christian's breast, it stops them short, with the needful and sharp rebuke, "Who maketh thee to differ? * * Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" Those who sincerely believe this doctrine can not but lie low in the dust of humility before God and say, "Thy will be done;" for all grounds of boasting, all "confidence in the flesh" is taken away. Humility is the fairest flower and brightest ornament of the Christian character, and "is in the sight of God of great price;" while pride is most detestable and hateful.

Election is no less adapted to inflame the heart with sacred love. "Love is of God." How can the humble and contrite-hearted help loving Him, (for "He first loved them;" is "ever nigh unto them;" loved them "with an everlasting love") when they are made to taste of that fountain of grace? They wonder at His love to them, such poor sinners, and praise the riches of His grace, for raising the needy and poor from the dunghill and the dust. Their hearts swell with gratitude, which is a delightful companion and near relative to love. Gratitude and thankfulness burns in heavenly bosoms and gives the sweetest accents to all their songs. In proportion as love and gratitude are promoted, the holiness and

comfort of man is advanced. That an interest in the election of Grace and a sense of it, warm on the heart, is a powerful incentive to love and gratitude, we may boldly assert, as we have an authority which none can dispute. Paul, when contemplating the riches of grace in eternal election, exclaimed: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." "We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, Because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." Such are the grateful acknowledgments the apostle makes, on the behalf of himself and his brethren, to the Author of all good, in reference to their election. And similar will be the sentiments of gratitude in every regenerate heart, in proportion as this important truth is known and experienced.

Nor is this doctrine calculated to discourage the inquiring soul, or overwhelm the awakened sinner with despondent fears. For the "poor in spirit," "those that mourn," "all ye that labor and are heavy laden," "everyone that thirsteth," the beggar, the wretched, and all such like are the special objects of election. It is the "light of eternal life" illuminating their souls that enables them to see their destitute and needy condition. No true, humble, mourning seeker is ever turned away from Mercy's door. To all such we would say that election will never wound or bruise you, but will give you all the assurance, as an anchor to your hopes, that the oath of Jehovah affords; Heb., 6, 17. Complete provision is made for the certain salvation of every sinner who feels his want

and applies to Christ. And they are just as sure to beg for mercy, as a hungry beggar (in a physical sense) is to ask for bread. The gospel is addressed to sinners considered as ready to perish. All the means necessary to their salvation is included in the decree of election, which is "ordered in all things and sure."

As the inward peace and spiritual joys of saints are greatly concerned in their conduct, a "goodly walk and conversation" is greatly promoted: For, "Ye should show forth the praise of Him, who [as a fruit of electing love] hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." Here is the Christian's duty in general, and to perform it should be his constant delight, for God and His cause is glorified thereby. An upright, moral walk by Him beautifully "adorns the doctrine of God, our Savior." should "give diligence to make his calling and election sure"-sure to himself; that is, that he may have a sweet assurance within of his acceptance "in the Beloved." The "mercies of God" and the glory of his name are the real grounds of all true exortations to the Christian for an obedient life. But, if election were such a revolting doctrine, as the world believes it to be, it would not be once mentioned by the sacred writers, unless to warn people against it. My limits have only allowed a brief outline of grace as it reigns in election.

CHAPTER IV.

GRACE AS IT REIGNS IN EFFECTUAL CALLING AND REGENERATION.

We have considered Grace as presiding in the counsels of heaven, and reigning as an absolute sovereign in the eternal decree of election. We now consider the same glorious Grace reigning in the regeneration and effectual calling of all that shall ever be saved. Election alone makes no real alteration in the state of its objects. For as they were considered in that gracious purpose, in a sinful and dying condition, so they continue in that situation, until God calls them from that condition and gives their souls life. All the chosen of God, in their several generations, and in God's own time, are again," and "called with an holy calling" "partakers" of His Grace. That important change which takes place in the sinner's heart and mind, when his soul is "quickened" or regenerated, is termed being "called of God," and "called by Grace." In performing this heavenly work of mercy, the Eternal Spirit is the grand and sole agent. And regeneration is the effect produced by the Holy Spirit in effectual calling; so effectual calling and regeneration are so closely related, that they practically mean the same thing.

Men in nature's night are considered as dead to God and dead in sins, not possessing the least spark spiritual life, nor the smallest ioto of lifebegetting power. But when they are called, spiritual life is communicated to their souls, which enlightens their minds to see the awful corruption of their hearts. "The dead [in trespasses and sins] shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." They are considered as at a distance from Him, in the ways of destruction, and now, "as a brand plucked out of the fire." "Him that cometh to me [as drawn by the Father] I will in no wise cast out." Such a wonderful revelation of grace, does the gospel make concerning perishing sinners. That any are "called out of darkness into His marvelous light" is entirely owing to divine grace. called me by His grace," is Paul's language; nor do the saints ascribe their call to any other cause. Man by nature, being dead in sins and unacquainted with the power and evil of sin and highly elated with a fond conceit of his own abilities, ever looks upon his "many offences" against God, rather as pitiable failings than as shocking crimes. He extenuates his faults and magnifies his duties, and so depreciates the work of Christ, by relying upon his own good performances. Being ignorant of his moral weakness, total depravity and corruption of his heart and the just demands of divine law, he endeavors, if at all concerned about his soul, to go "about to establish his own righteousness" as the ground of his acceptance with God. He trusts in some fancied mercy offered all mankind, and conditioned upon their works, to make up the deficiencies of his own performances. In case of a relapse into

open and scandalous offences, he flatters himself with the hopes of pardon and of being reinstated into God's love, if he but forsake his transgressions, be sorry for them and amend his ways for the future. This he thinks is the obvious and easy way of placating an offended God and obtaining His favor. On such a sandy foundation are the hopes of man commonly built. Thus he lies deadly asleep in sin, dreaming of happiness, on the brink of a dreadful precipice; for "there is a way which seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." But when the Spirit of God illuminates his soul and convinces of sin and manifests the law's extensive and righteous demands to his conscience; when he is informed that his every sin subjects him to a dreadful curse, then his fears are alarmed and his endeavors quickened. Being now thoroughly aroused, he is more earnest in his endeavors after holiness and religious duties. He now is not content with that superficial way of performing religious duties, which before satisfied his conscience and gratified his pride. For now guilt burns in his soul, and conscience sharpens her stings; while the terrors of the Almighty seem to be set in array against him. The duties he has neglected, the mercies he has abused, and the many daring acts of rebellion he has committed against his divine Sovereign crowd in upon his mind and rack his very soul. The justice of the Lawgiver appears ready to vindicate the law, as holy and good, and like an incensed adversary, unsheaths its sword and makes a loud demand for vengeance. In such a situation he can not but earnestly seek to escape impending ruin. But yet, his heart being deeply leavened with legal pride and unacquainted

with the divine righteousness, he labors to obtain salvation, "as it were, by the works of the law." But when he is further made sensible of his depravity of heart and of the defects attending his best performances; when he considers how very imperfect they now appear in his own eyes, and that a perfect righteousness is absolutely necessary to his acceptance with the Eternal Judge; then his hopes of salvation by his own obedience vanish, and his apprehensions of eternal punishment increase. "when the commandment comes," shining in its purity and operating on his conscience with power, "sin is revived;" a sense of deserved wrath possesses his soul and his former self-righteous hopes expire. He now reflects on his past ignorance and pharisaical pride with the deepest self-abhorrence. But, however reluctant, he is obliged to give up his former exalted notions of his own moral excellence and with the polluted leper cry, "Unclean!" now sincerely believes those emphatic passages of Scripture which describe the state of a natural man, by a filthy sow wallowing in the mire, by a dog in love with his vomit, by an open sephulchre emitting the abhorred stench of a putrefying carcass, and by the heart being "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," etc. He now feels that pollution has defiled his whole soul. He now feels that his many sins spring from a corrupt fountain within his breast, and that his whole life has been one continued scene of iniquity. Instead of living every moment of his time in uninterrupted and most fervent love to God, as the law requires, he finds to his grief and shame that he has lived in the love of self and sin. Viewing the holy law as a transcript of divine purity,

he plainly sees that he is no less obliged to love God with all the powers of his soul, for the sake of his infinite excellence, than he is to avoid the horrid crimes of murder and adultery. In a word, he now considers himself as the "chief of sinners" wholly unworthy of the least of God's favors. sentence of the law, though terrible to the last degree, he admits to be just, while he can not but dread the execution; yet from his heart he acquits the Lawgiver of any unrighteous severity, though he should never taste of mercy. It is the infinite Jehovah against whom he has sinned. God is just, and justice requires that sin should not escape unpunished; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Thus he is stripped of "all his armour wherein he trusted" and lies at the feet of sovereign mercy. As a rebel against the Majesty of heaven, conscious that he deserves to perish, he lies deep in the dust of selfabasement and low at the footstool of divine grace. He now sees that he has absolutely no claims for that grace. He now becomes a beggar (and that from the bottom of his heart, too) for mercy; for he at last realizes that nothing but unconditional mercy can reach his case.

But Grace reigns. All the blessed promises of the Bible are addressed to the above class of characters. To them the gospel comes with all its declarations of salvation through Christ. Not as a conditional offer, but as a positive declaration of the glad tidings of salvation. The above preparation is needful, as disposing the sinner to receive; for he will neither seek nor accept the great atonement, until

fully sensible that divine wrath and the damnation of hell are what he deserves. He must come to Christ under that character by which he is called; and he is plainly called a "sinner." As a miserable, ruined, perishing sinner, in experience, he must go to Christ for salvation. The gospel of peace is preached to such; and by them the gospel is joyfully heard. Yes, disconsolate sinner, be it known unto you, that the gospel, with all its blessings, that Christ, with all His fullness, are glorious provisions made by the great Sovereign, and by grace are reigning for the guilty and wretched. The gospel of Jesus Christ was intended for the relief of such as are altogether miserable and without hope in themselves. Such was the beneficent design of God, and such is the joyful news declared by the word. The blessings of grace were never designed to distinguish the worthy or to reward merit, but to relieve the wretched and save the desperate. These hear and rejoice. These are the exclusive patentees in the heavenly grant. For all those who imagine themselves to be the better sort of people, who depend upon their own duties, and plead their own worthiness for salvation, and are not willing to stand as a dependent, on a level with publicans and harlots, Christ has not now anything to bestow upon them, nor the gospel anything to say to them. As they are too proud to live upon alms, or to be entirely beholden to sovereign Grace, they in their hearts do not ask for that grace. He, therefore, who believes in Christ relies upon Him as the "justifier of the ungodly." Nor does the sensible sinner consider himself in any other light, or as being any other character, in that very moment when he first believed on Him; for if he did, he could not believe on

Him as the justifier of the ungodly. The free declarations of the gospel, concerning Jesus and His grace, contain a sufficient warrant for one who feels to be the vilest sinner to look for relief at the hands of Christ. Such as, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." In these, as in many similar passages of holy writ, the guilty and sensible sinner is encouraged to look to the Lord with all the assurance that he shall not be disappointed therein. These free declarations are founded on the glorious undertaking and finished work of Jesus Christ, who "suffered for the unjust," died for them while sinners and ungodly; and who reconciled them to God when they were enemies, by His death; so that "all things are now ready" for the sinner's enjoyment and happiness, here, in a life of faith and holiness; hereafter in the fruition of glory. These divine testimonies are only a fraction of what might be produced, and they, together with many others of. like import, are the proper grounds of our faith in Christ, or dependence on Him for salvation. Hence it appears that the sinner, who is effectually called of God, is not led by the Holy Spirit to believe in a dying Redeemer, under the persuasion that he is better than other people. No, the divine Spirit does not bear witness with our spirits concerning our own inherent excellencies or superiority to others, but concerning the all-sufficiency and fulness of Christ

and of all the blessings included in His mediation. The basis of the believer's hope and the source of his joy arise not from what he has done towards his salvation, but from simply trusting in Christ. The gospel declares the fullness of Christ and His righteousness "to faith." It is the joyful news of salvation for sinners through Christ, "who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." "Life" is brought to "light" through the gospel, where it already exists in the soul, and not conveyed by the gospel as is often supposed. "The gift of God is eternal life," not of the preacher or through his assistance, but "through Jesus Christ our Lord." To make spiritual life, which the sinner receives in regeneration, depend upon man is to undeify the Spirit; for it makes the new birth depend upon an arm of flesh, and "no flesh should glory in His presence," because of God "are they in Christ Jesus." It sets man up so high that the Spirit sometimes seems to be entirely overlooked in this matter. And all the praise that man ascribes to himself, just that much less will he have for God. Regeneration is a physical work, wrought upon the soul by God alone, whereby "eternal life" is communicated to it; and by such birth, the saved becomes virtually united to Christ.

The sinner now rejoices in Christ as his Savior; he beholds Grace on the throne; he bows, adores and rejoices. Gratitude abounds in his heart and praise flows from his lips. He is convinced to a demonstration that his calling must be alone ascribed to reigning grace. He is fully persuaded that God was the first mover in this wonderful blessing.

When he meditates upon his calling his song is,

"Amazing Grace! how sweet the sound

That saved a wretch like me!

I once was lost, but now I'm found,

Was blind, but now I see."

Happy are you, dear reader, if you know by experience what it is to be called by grace. comes you to "walk worthy of your calling," for it is high, holy and heavenly. You are "called out of darkness into His marvelous light," out of worse than Egyptian bondage "into the glorious [light and] liberty of the children of God." You are called from slavery to sin to the practice of holiness and into a state of grace here and the full enjoyment of glory hereafter. It is the Most High God that called you. It is the way of holiness you are called to walk in. It is an unfading inheritance and an eternal kingdom you are called to enjoy. Here is your blessedness and, also, here is your duty. The consideration of these things, as a noble incentive to obedience, should fire your mind with godly zeal; should fill your heart with gratitude; should direct your feet in the paths of duty and manifest its constraining influence through your whole conduct. Your daily prayer should be for "grace, whereby to serve Him acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

CHAPTER V.

GRACE AS IT REIGNS IN FULL, FREE AND EVER-LASTING PARDON.

Pardon of sin is a blessing of superlative worth, because absolutely necessary to present peace and future salvation. Without it no individual of Adam's race can be eternally happy.

When the conscience of a sinner is wounded with guilt and oppressed with fears of divine wrath, pardon is sought with ardor, as the most desirable thing, and received with joy, as the first of all favors. Pardon is a divine revelation of the richest grace. We are taught with absolute certainty in the Bible, that "there is forgiveness with God." This revelation of mercy is of great antiquity. It was known to the Patriarchs; but by the incarnation and work of the Son of God, it receives the highest confirmation and shines in all its glory.

This capital blessing of the new covenant is represented in the Scriptures by many strong metaphors and in a rich variety of language; yet all in exact correspondence to the different views there given of the dreadful nature and complicated evils of sin. When the sinner is described as all over "defiled" and "loathsome," with hateful impurity, his pardon is denoted by the perfect "cleansing" and the "covering" of all his filth. When he is

compared to a wretched insolvent and his offenses to a debt of "ten thousand talents," his pardon is denoted by a "blotting out" of the debt, or a non-imputation of it. When his transgressions are represented by "clouds," lowering, black and just ready to burst into a storm, his pardon is described by "blotting them out" from the face of heaven. To such the gracious Lord is pleased to say, "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." He casts "all our sins behind His back," throws them "into the depths of the sea," removes them "as far as the east is from the west," "remembers them no more" and makes "scarlet" and "crimson" offenses "white as wool," yea "whiter than snow."

In this forgiveness grace reigns and the riches of grace are wonderfully displayed. It is an absolutely perfect pardon. And to make it so, three things are required. It must be full, free and everlasting. That is, it must extend to "all sin;" it must be vouchsafed without any conditions to be performed by the sinner, and it must be absolutely irreversible.

That forgiveness which is equal to the wants of a sinner must be full, including all sins, be they ever so numerous, and extending to all their aggravations, be they ever so enormous. Every sin is a transgression of divine law, and every transgression subjects the offender to a dreadful curse, if the penalty be not remitted. Hence appears the necessity of a full pardon in order to complete happiness. And the Scriptures declare, that when the Lord pardons anyone, he forgives all their sins. For He declares, "I will cleanse them from all their iniq-

uities whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have transgressed against me." Delightful and amazing declarations! To forgive sin is a divine prerogative. None but God can dispense such an unspeakable favor. And this He declares He will do; not only forgive some sins, or a few, but all, entirely. The prophet Micah, when speaking of the King Eternal, with an air of thanksgiving and joy, declares, "He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us, He will subdue our iniquities: and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Beholding with pity and tender compassion our miserable condition, "He will turn again;" not as an incensed adversary to execute vengeance, but as a loving Father to manifest the riches of His grace. He will relieve our distress and richly supply all our wants. "He will subdue our [awful] iniquities;" He will remove their guilt by atoning blood, annul Satan's dominion by victorious grace and "cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Their sins, as a burden too heavy to bear, as an object too hateful for thee to behold, thou wilt forever remove them and forever cast out of thy sight. Here the fulness and perpetuity of divine forgiveness is expressed with all the force of language. Another infallible writer expresses the glorious and celebrates the ineffable blessing, in language of exultation. To hear his words is delightful, and to partake of his joy is transporting: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name!" Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." To whomsoever God pardoneth sin, He so forgives it, that as to the eye

of His vindictive justice, He "sees it no more;" there is "none to be found" charged against them. Hence there can be no condemnation against such persons.

This forgiveness is worthy of God and suitable to the chief of sinners. It flows from sovereign grace and reaches the foulest crimes. By this gracious pardon, "scarlet" and "crimson" sins are washed "whiter than snow." The blood of Christ is possessed of infinite efficacy and energy, arising from the superlative dignity of His person and is able to "cleanse from all sin." Thus Grace, like a mighty and compassionate monarch, passes an act of oblivion on millions of the most heinous sins; for Jehovah is the God of pardon. This is His name and this is His glory. For He says, "I will pardon all their iniquities * * * and it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honor before all the nations of the earth." Astonishing words! The Sovereign of all worlds glories in pardoning grace, "because He delighteth in mercy."

Come then, poor trembling sinner, let us contemplate the riches of God's grace. Though you are "by nature a child of wrath" and a monster of iniquity, yet there is relief; for there is full forgiveness with God. Such is His mercy, that "He waits to be gracious," in bestowing such an invaluable blessing. And as He never confers favors on account of anything worthy in the object; so He never withholds it on account of any peculiar aggravations in the sinner's conduct or character. To dispute this is to deny that salvation is by grace. Divine mercy is not conditional, narrow or limited, like that which is exercised by men; backward to

interpose till something inviting appears, as a moving cause. No, it is divinely sovereign and absolutely free. Let this be the sensible and trembling sinner's rest and joy, that grace reigns in the pardon of all sin. Christ, our Surety, performed all those conditions necessary to accomplish this great end. They were His incarnation, His most perfect obedience to the divine law and the "Father's will," and subjection to the most infamous death of the cross. As to Christ, our substitute, blood was the vigorous condition, blood was the dreadful demand; even the pouring out of "His own blood" was the righteous requisition of divine justice. For "without shedding of blood [even the blood of the Prince of life and Lord of glory] there is no remission" of any offence. The atonement of our glorious "High Priest" is that which satisfies the claims of justice, procures the pardon of sin and pacifies the conscience of man when pained with a sense of guilt.

This forgiveness is dispensed according to the riches of divine mercy and is received in a way of grace. As it is written: "We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." The death of Christ is the meritorious cause, and the glory of God the ultimate end, that Jehovah has in view when bestowing this blessing. "God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Not because of worth or merits in the sinner, but for "my own sake." Let poor sinners shout for joy, as they meditate upon such merciful words and such amazing mercy. Though sin abounds like a flood, grace abounds like an ocean.

Such language expresses pardon as being absolutely free in respect to the criminal. Reigning grace does such wonders as will fill heaven with hallelujahs to all eternity. God's methods of reclaiming offenders and of softening the hearts of hardened sinners are not like ours; for they are in a peculiar way his own and highly becoming Himself. Grace takes the rebels in hand; and what is the consequence? Why, their spiritual diseases are healed, their crying sins are pardoned, the sons of Belial (according to nature) are reduced to obedience and made partakers of heavenly joy. Paul was a barbarous persecutor of the children of God. He "breathed out threatenings and slaughter" against the saints of the Most High, "and being exceeding mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. It is not possible for words to express a much worse diabolical temper, or more savage disposition. He confesses that, "I was a blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious." Yet this great "chief of sinners" "obtained mercy!" When his thoughts were big with vengeance and his heart thirsting for blood, he was suddenly arrested in his wicked career. He was turned about; for he was a "chosen vessel," and was to be qualified to preach that same glorious grace which had been so abundantly manifested towards him. So that, though "sin abounded, grace did much more abound." And though the manner of his conviction was marvelous, yet his case was not peculiar. For he says, "For this cause I obtained mercy, [not that he might appear as a singular instance of divine mercy, but] that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should

hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting."
The cases of Zacchæus, the Publican, the Samaritan woman, the Philippian jailor, the poor Gadarene, the thief on the cross and others might be commented upon, but the limits of this work will not permit. How amazing are the methods of grace! and how mortifying to human pride is the conduct of Christ! When addressed by a very decent and respectable "young ruler," one whom man would naturally think especially qualified to assist cause (for he was "rich") Christ sends him "sorrowful" away. But the dying thief only asks, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Nature teaches and pride suggests, that this is language suited only to the lips of apostles, prophets and martyrs; much less to a selfconfessed criminal. But we can find no reason why mercy was shown him, only that grace reigned. For this grace, let angels and the spirits of just men made perfect dwell on the charming sound! Let the worst of sinners look at it and rejoice, for it is an all-sufficient ground of dependence, even for blasphemers, persecutors and thieves, when grace opens their eyes to the need of mercy. We behold with wonder the conduct of the Lord Redeemer. Can we cease to admire the power of divine grace? The death of the Son of God was the most wonderful event that ever took place on the theater of this world. And it was intended to be a foundation of hope for sinners in the most desperate cases; because the circumstances attending His death were wisely adapted to answer that gracious design, in its utmost latitude. The Prince of Life "was numbered with transgressors" and crucified

between two thieves. He died the most abhorred of deaths, and in the worst of company. But this was not accidental; for it was determined by Jehovah and was the subject of ancient prophecy. This was graciously ordered in the purpose of God to afford relief to the flagrant offender, who is made to beg for mercy. No regard is paid to the moral character or human excellence. Unbelief and pride are ready to conclude that this, the most amazing of all transactions, was principally intended for the most respectable part of mankind, for those who want but little assistance and would be able to do tolerably well without it. On such a supposition, certain despair would have awaited those notorious criminals and guilty wretches, in whose salvation mercy delights, and for whom the great atonement was provided. The Holy One of Israel was not only crucified to show that He died under a charge of the blackest guilt, and was "made a curse," but He was crucified between "two thieves." He made His exit, and was numbered with such as all the world would agree to pronounce "transgressors," with such as have ever been esteemed by all nations as unworthy to live. But why was this, if not to show that as the best of men, practically, have no solid foundation of hope, except the blood of the cross; so those who have been the very worst, have no reason to despair, while they behold by faith the Lord of glory expire in such company? and especially when they remember that He took one of those home with Him to glory!

Dear reader, would you think it a gross affront to your character, were we to assert that you stand on the very same terms, with regard to your acceptance of God, as that thief? and that the most upright men have nothing more to plead before their Maker, than he had? Yet this is certain truth; for salvation is entirely by grace, and grace is unconditional mercy. Grace, therefore, has no regard to any real or supposed difference among men. All whom it relieves are considered as on the same level. We may therefore conclude that whoever looks for salvation by any other way than that which saved that thief will meet with disappointment.

Grace in the free pardon of sin appears with majesty and demonstrates its power to be infinitely great and supremely glorious. Thus poor trembling sinners are enabled to hope in His mercy. God delights in mercy, and all those recorded instances of His mercy were ordered by Him, to be transmitted to the children of men, "that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus."

There were blessed effects produced on the minds and morals of all whom grace pardoned, as the Scriptures abundantly show. They were forgiven and then told to "go and sin no more." Paul counted not his very life dear, so that he might propagate the glorious mercy of God. The woman of Samaria immediately drew numbers to hear that gracious voice. The healed Gadarene "published" what "great things" Jesus had done for him; and even the thief, the few moments he had to live, justified God in punishing him, and, in love to his partner in crime, reproved him for his plasphemy and warned him of his danger. When grace softens the heart and fills it with love, then is the sinner in a

true condition to perform works that are pleasing in God's sight. He may be hindered by circumstances from doing many things, but he has that desire in his heart. How his heart should burn with love and gratitude when he remembers that, "when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." None can deny that pardon of sin is essential to a state of reconciliation with God. And it is impossible that reconciliation and forgiveness of those, who are "enemies" to Him, should ever take place on account of anything good which they have The curse is executed upon Christ: for "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us," and the way is opened for mercy, in that way, to show the wonderful riches of His grace. For God's holy law is thereby honored and justice satisfied in a way that is the surprise and wonder of heaven. To contrive it was the work of infinite wisdom; to manifest it was a display of boundless grace. In such a method of dispensing forgiveness, how safely may the alarmed conscience rest! For while it is most happily adapted to impress the mind with an awful sense of the infinite evil of sin, the purity of the divine nature and the extensive demands of the holy law, it encourages the most unreserved confidence in mercy, thus revealed, and cherishes the liveliest hope in grace, thus reigning. That "forgiveness which is with God" is such as becomes the Majesty of heaven and such as is suited to his infinite excellencies. When the Lord pardons sinners, He demonstrates His Diety, or that He is infinitely superior to all of His creatures in acts of forgiveness, as well as in every perfection of His nature. "For "I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger * * * for I am God and not man." He freely forgives our "ten thousand talents of indebtedness, while we can scarcely forgive those indebted to us "a hundred pence."

This glorious forgiveness is "everlasting" and irreversible, which is the crowning requisite of complete pardon. Various passages in sacred writ evince this glorious truth. Among many others, we can not omit that charming clause in the new covenant: "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." This declaration and the blessing signified by it enter into the very essence of the new, the better and the "everlasting covenant. If the Lord, whose royal prerogative it is to punish or pardon the criminal, declare that He will "remember his iniquities no more," we may rest assured that it is an everlasting pardon, a full and free forgiveness, never to be reversed. This declaration is not simply a promise (though a mere promise from the God of truth is irrevocable,) but a positive declaration, and with faithfulness, itself, engaged to fulfill it. Thus it continues, not depending upon conditions to be performed by the sinner, but upon the perpetual efficacy of our Lord's atonement and the inviolable faithfulness of the eternal God. There is all possible security that a full and free pardon, once granted, shall ever abide in full force and in all its virtue. David declares, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." So the sins of those, who are forgiven, shall never come against them to their condemnation, unless those two opposite points should meet and so cease to be what they are. Nor can that blessedness

ascribed to the pardoned sinner, by David, be accounted for on any other supposition. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." For if all his offences were not forgiven, and that forever, what peace would there be for his mind here? and what hope of glory could he enjoy? The continuance of his pardoned state does not dedend upon his own obedience, but upon the faithfulness of God, and this affords solid grounds for hope. "Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." The iniquities of pardoned sinners are here compared to some heavy thing, which when cast into the deep is absolutely lost. By such language does God represent the perpetuity of His forgiveness. Again, "The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none, and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found." And the reason is, "for I will pardon them whom I reserve." God's people are again addressed in the following remarkable manner;" "As I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would no more be wroth with thee. For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Here we have, not only the word, but the oath of Jehovah, in attestation to the glorious truth, that those pardoned by His grace have their sins forgiven forever. Well might Paul ask, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? and "Who is he that condemneth?" Such is the nature and properties of divine forgiveness which is the purchase of Emmanuel's pains and the price of his redeeming blood.

The doctrine of pardon is an essential branch of the gospel. Its cheering language of that heavenly message is, "Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man [this illustrious Jesus] is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." Such is the Scriptural testimony, and the glorious blessing is received by faith in the Redeemer of sinners. As it is written, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name, whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." It is by faith in his blood that we believe it possesses that efficacy to wash away our sins, (not that faith is a condition of pardon) and thus we receive the "atonement." The propitiating blood of Christ is sprinkled on our hearts; pardon is applied to our consciences, and peace is enjoyed in our souls. Though God's people are often chastised for their disobedience, yet they have the strongest assurance, that He "will never take from them His loving kindness, [because it is stored in Christ] nor suffer His faithfulness to fail."

When true believers now pray for pardon of sin, their meaning is, that they might have the sense, the manifestation and application of pardoning grace to their souls. We are not to imagine, that as often as the saints sin, repent and pray for forgiveness of sin, that God makes and passes new acts of pardon. But whereas they daily sin against Him, they have need for the fresh manifestations of pardon to their souls. And it is both their duty and to their interests to attend the throne of grace, as Christ set them an example.

How glorious is that forgiveness which is with God, that pardon which he alone can give! It has

every requisite to make it complete in itself. It is suitable to the most indigent and miserable sinner. It has not one discouraging circumstance to forbid the most guilty or unworthy applying to the evermerciful Jehovah for it. It is without conditions performed by the sinner. It is full, free and everlasting. It is in every way complete and worthy of God; such as becomes His nature and excellencies. Go with all your half-forgiveness and conditional pardons unto those who do not see the "desperately wicked" conditions of their hearts. It may please them, for it is like themselves. But that of God is absolutely perfect and free to all those who truly feel their need of mercy; for "He hath filled the hungry with good things."

Their duty is not to "continue in sin that grace may abound," but to live in that way and manner that will "show forth the praises of Him" who has been so merciful to them. A sense of pardon, warm on the heart, will work a "godly sorrow" for sin and the corruptions of the flesh. It will cause one to confess them to God with grief and shame, and to often pray for "grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." And where these fruits do not appear, we may rightly conclude that the person (though he may make high pretentions and loud professions) is a stranger to grace.

CHAPTER VI.

GRACE AS IT REIGNS IN JUSTIFICATION.

The doctrine of Justification makes a very distinguishing figure in that religion which is from above, and is a capital article of that "faith which was once delivered to the saints." Far from being a merely speculative point, it spreads its influence through the whole body of divinity, runs through all christian experience and operates in every part of practical godliness. Such is its grand importance; for this doctrine is the way of a sinner's acceptance with God. It is of such moment and is so inseparably connected with many other evangelical truths, that until this gloriously appears, the others can not be understood, and so will be involved in darkness.

While Pardon and Justification are blessings which can not be separated, yet we treat upon each separately; for while they are closely related, they are not the same thing. For when a person is pardoned he is considered a "transgressor;" but when he is justified, he is considered as "righteous." When a murderer is pardoned, he is freed from an obligation to suffer death for his crime; but should he be justified, he is declared worthy of life as innocent of that crime.

How shall sinful "man be just with God?" is a

very interesting question to the anxious inquirer after truth. But notwithstanding its importance, man's wisdom could have never solved the problem, if the Lord had not exercised and made known the riches of His grace to His rebellious creatures. such is the good pleasure of God, that He frequently reveals this truth, in all its glory, to those who are esteemed fools by the wise of this world, that no flesh should have the least grounds for boasting. Justification is a judicial term and means the declaring of a person righteous according to law. is not the making of a person righteous, (that is the work of sanctification) but the act of a judge, pronouncing the party acquitted from all judicial charges, and is the opposite of condemnation. The sentence of condemnation does not make the party guilty, as he was guilty before; but being judged guilty, he is accordingly condemned. So, in justification the party is pronounced righteous in the eyes of the law, is deemed worthy to live and his right to life is declared. Hence the justification, of which we treat, is called the "justification of life;" Rom., v, 18. Justification, in a theological sense, is either legal or evangelical. If any person could be found that had never broken the divine law in any way, he would be justified by it in a manner strictly legal. But in this way none of the human race can be justified, or stand acquitted before God; for "all have sinned;" "there is none righteous, no not one." On legal grounds, therefore, every offender is excluded from all hope of ever being justified in God's sight. that justification, of which we write, is called evangelical. It is an imputed righteousness, and is especially adapted to reach the sinner's case; for it

is a "righteousness without law." This is provided by grace, and is revealed in "the gospel of the grace of God." In this matter there is the most wonderful display of divine justice and of boundless grace; of divine justice, if we regard the meritorious cause and ground on which the Justifier proceeds, in absolving the condemned sinner and in pronouncing him righteous; of boundless grace, if we consider the state and character of those persons to whom this blessing is granted.

Justification may be further distinguished, as being either at the bar of God and in the court of conscience, or in the sight of the world and before our fellow creatures. The former is by grace alone, and the latter is by works. We proceed to consider the former, which may be thus defined: Justification, is a judicial and gracious act of God, by which a sinner is absolved from the guilt of sin, is freed from condemnation and is adjudged as having a right to eternal life, merely for the sake of our Lord's obedience, which is imputed to him. To justify is a divine prerogative, for "it is God that justifieth." That Sovereign whom we have so greatly offended, whose law we have broken by ten thousand acts of rebellion against Him, has in the way of His own appointment the sole right of acquitting the guilty and of pronouncing them righteous. Jehovah's judgment is always according to truth, and He is the justifier of all that believe in Jesus. Here grace reigns; for the infinitely wise God appoints the way; the righteous and merciful God provides the means, and the "God of all grace" imputes the righteousness and pronounces the sinner acquitted, in perfect agreement with the demands of

His violated law and the rights of offended justice.

It is plain, from the Bible, that all the three divine Persons (which are one, and we do not wish to separate them) are concerned in this grand affair. The eternal Father is represented as appointing the way and giving His own Son to perform the condition of our acceptance before Him; the divine Son, engaging to sustain the curse and make the atonement, to fulfill the terms and provide the righteousness, by which we are justified; and the Holy Spirit, as revealing to sinners the perfections, suitableness and freeness of the Savior's work, as exhibited in the Scriptures. And may we not, with Paul, ask, "Who is he that condemneth?" Jehovah pronounce the sinner acquitted, who in earth, heaven or hell, shall reverse the sentence? the Most High entirely justify, who shall bring a second charge? There is no higher court to which an appeal can be made, or a complaint be lodged against any of those happy souls, whose gracious privilege, it is to be justified by Him. This justification is in every way complete, (no need of a further justification) and shall never be rendered void, but stands firm as the throne of God. This "justification of life" is pregnant with all the blessings "of the everlasting covenant" and with all the felicity of the world of glory.

The persons to whom this wonderful favor is granted are "sinners," and "ungodly." "To him that worketh is the reward [of justification and of eternal life as connected with it] not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth [whom? the righteous? the holy? the eminently pious? No! but]

the ungodly, his faith [or that in which he believes] is counted unto him for righteousness." From this remarkable text we learn that the subjects of justification, considered in themselves, are not only destitute of righteousness, but have performed no good works at all. They are called "ungodly" when the heavenly blessing is bestowed upon them. The sinner, the ungodly person, "him that worketh not" is the subject towards whom grace reigns in justification. This is not capable of any evading interpretation. "Him that worketh not" is he that worketh not; let men say what they please and dispute as long as they will.

"Being justified freely by His grace:" If these words do not prove that justification is entirely free, without regard to any supposed holy qualities in the sinner, or any good works performed by him previous to his justification, we think it hard to tell what such words do mean. We affirm, and that without fear of successful contradiction, that such language means that justification is an act of God's pure and unmixed grace, exclusive of all good works and absolutely independent of any such thing as human worthiness. Here grace appears and reigns in glorious wonder. So the true believer esteems it, and as such rejoices in it. In this, as in every part of his salvation, he is willing to be less than nothing, that grace may reign; that grace may be all in all.

He that is pardoned is justified, and he that is justified is pardoned. Consequently, if our pardon be free, our justification can not be conditional. So great a blessing; yet absolutely free; so divine a favor, yet not suspended on any conditions to be performed by the sinner, discovers astonishing

grace. This should silence the fears and raise the hopes of poor mourning souls, who know by bitter experience that they are sinners. But that right-eousness, by which they are justified, must be perfect and in every way equal to all demands. That righteousness was wrought through Christ's obedience. It is complete and in every way perfect in itself. This righteousness is such that the sinner may plead at the throne of grace and at the bar of judgment; for it is "the righteousness of saints," pure, "clean and white."

Men often talk of conditions of justification, but the only condition of our acceptance with God is a perfect righteousness. This the law requires, nor does the gospel substitute another; for it does not in any degree make void the law. Perfect obedience was demanded by it of man before his fall. Perfect obedience God's law still demands of man, though in a state of sin. And perfect obedience His law must have, either at our own, or at a surety's hand, or we must fall eternally under the curse. And Paul, when handling the doctrine of justification, positively affirms and strongly proves that there is no acceptance with God "by the works of the law." The works of the law are those duties of piety and of humanity which the law requires, and which are our duties to perform. But Paul rejects all our works and all our duties of every kind in this matter. the deeds of the law, [by our own obedience to it, however sincere] shall no flesh be justified [accepted of God and pronounced righteous] in His sight." The reason is evident; "for by the law is the knowledge of sin," as an opposition to the divine revealed will, and as deserving of an everlasting curse.

if so, it is absolutely impossible that we could be justified by it; for a law which proves us guilty is far from pronouncing us righteous in the eyes of the "The law entered that the offense Lawgiver. might abound" — that the abundance of our iniquities might be manifested and their exceeding sinfulness appear. "The law worketh wrath;" it reveals the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. It fastens a charge of guilt on the the criminal and works a sense of deserved wrath on his conscience. Far from justifying any offender, it denounces utter destruction against him and unsheaths the sword of vengeance. "As many as are of the works of the law [who do their utmost endeavors to keep it and are looking for justification by it] are [far from being in a promising way to obtain acceptance with God and be rewarded with eternal life] under the [dreadful] curse. For it is written, [by the pen of infalibility and is awfully expressive of Jehovah's unchangeable purpose] cursed is every one [without any respect of persons or regard to their pleas] that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." From this alarming text we learn, that there never was, nor ever can be, any acceptance with God, without a perfect obedience—an obedience perfect in its principles, complete in all its parts and without the least interruption in thought, word or deed. For he who fails in one point breaks the law, is guilty be-"That no fore God, and is exposed to its curse. man [however excellent his moral character; however righteous in his own estimation] is justified by [his own obedience to] the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for the just [the truly righteous and

justified persons] shall live by faith. And [that he does not obtain that character, or enjoy the blessedness connected therewith by virtue of his own obedience, appears from hence] the law is not of faith: [it makes no mention of a Redeemer, or of believing in Him] but [its language is] the man that doeth them [that punctually performs the duties enjoined and entirely avoids the things prohibited; he, and he only] shall live in them"-shall find acceptance and enjoy peace. But "if righteousness came by the law [if men either were or could be justified by their own duties and endeavors] then [it would inevitably follow that] Christ is dead in vain;" for all His obedience and all his bitter sufferings were useless things; there was no occasion for them. Again, "if they which are of the law be heirs [if they who rely, on their own legal performances, be accepted of God and entitled to the heavenly inheritance] faith [in a dying Redeemer's blood] is made [entirely] void, and the promise [of life by Him] made of none effect."

Paul's design was to set aside all our obedience to every law, all our works and duties of every kind, so far as our acceptance of God and justification before Him is concerned, "that it might be [wholly] by grace." This certainly appears plain from the following: "God imputeth righteousness without works." "By grace are ye saved * * not of works." "Not by works of righteousness which we have done." "Not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace," etc.

Now of what are men so ready to boast, in a religious point of view, but their own good works

and pious performances? But these are all excluded, "lest any man should boast." While these are our duties while we live, they will by no means justify us before God, nor cause Him to accept us.

Nor is "faith" our righteousness, or that for the sake of which we are justified; for though believers are said to be justified by faith, yet not for faith. No man's faith is perfect; and if it were, it would not be equal to the demands of divine law, and so could not be a perfect righteousness. And the judgment of God is according to truth and the rights of His law. That obedience by which a sinner is justified is called "the righteousness of faith"-"righteousness by faith," and is "revealed to faith." Consequently, it can not be faith itself. Faith in the matter of justification stands opposite to all works— "To him that worketh not, but believeth." Now, if it were our justifying righteousness, it would be highly improper to consider it in such light. And again, it would be a work or condition, on the performance of which our acceptance with God would be manifestly suspended. But works of all kinds, without exception, are excluded. That which is "the end of the law" (all that the law could desire) is our righteousness, which certainly is not faith itself, or our own obedience, but the obedience of our exalted Substitute. For "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." That righteousness, by which many are justified, is "the obedience of one." the believer were justified for the sake of his own faith, there would be as many distinct righteousnesses as there were justified persons. It is not faith itself, but its glorious object, which Paul

intends, when he speaks of faith being imputed for righteousness, We should not put our faith in the place of Christ, no more than our obedience. The principle of true obedience is the love of God; and this heavenly affection is not natural to man, but is a "fruit of the Spirit;" yet such obedience is included in our "own righteousness," and so must be laid aside. Paul's desire was to "be found in Him, not having my own righteousness * * but the righteousness which is of God."

When we talk of terms and conditions respecting the covenant of grace, the question is not whether they be great or small, hard or easy, but whether there be any conconditions at all to be performed by the sinner in order to his accepttance with God. We confidently affirm that justification is unconditional, and that sinners saved for Christ's sake alone. If the subject of such a gracious blessing be in himself "ungodly," and a perfect righteousness is required, he must look to Christ for it. Only in His finished work and perfect obedience can the sinner ever find that righteousness which is perfect in all requirements. The spotless obedience, the bitter sufferings and the accursed death of our heavenly Surety constitute that very righteousness, by which poor, ungodly sinners are justified before God. That amazing work which the incarnate Son completed, when He expired on the cross, is the grand requisite for our justification before the heavenly tribunal. To this and to this only, the eternal Sovereign has respect when he pronounces the sinner just and acquits him in judgement. Hence we are said to "be made righteous by the obedience of one"

(Christ) and to be "justified by His blood." This blood being shed, and that obedience being performed by our divine substitute, on the sinner's behalf and in his nature, are placed to his account as fully, and as much to his advantage, as if he had in his own person undergone the sufferings and performed the obedience. By this obedience to the "Father's will," and without any additions whatever by us, God's law is honored and eternal justice completely satisfied. That we are not justified by a personal, but by an imputed righteousness is plainly taught in the Scriptures.

Abraham was the renowned progenitor the Israelitish nation. He was called the "Friend of God," and his resignation, faith and obedience stand on everlasting record. He readily obeyed the call to leave his native land, and as readily assented to the heavenly mandate to sacrifice his only heir and son, though such an order was quite unprecedented, and we would think calculated to astonish and confound him. Yet these acts of obedience, though pleasing to God, were neither the cause nor the condition of his justification. They afford positive testimony that his faith was genuine —a "faith which worketh by love," not a faith" which might be professed by any man. His works declared his faith and piety real; they sprang from a good heart and proper motives, and in this sense and in our sight, he was "justified by his works." But however much he may be justified and praised by man, this is far from being placed to his account in the matter of divine acceptance, though his works were very great. "For if Abraham were justified by his [own] works, he hath whereof to

glory; but not before God. For what saith the Scriptures? Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness." And Paul concludes that "it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him; but for us also [whether Jews or Gentiles] to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." For "they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." Now if Abraham was not justified before God by his works, who should pretend or expect justification and acquittal because of good works. But "blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." The blessed man is here described as one who is, in himself, a polluted creature and guilty criminal. As one who, before grace made the difference, was on a level with the rest of mankind, equally unworthy and equally wretched; and the sacred penman informs us, that all his blessedness arises from an imputed righteousness - "to whom God imputeth righteousness without works." The sinner's own works and duties, however excellent, contribute nothing towards this blessedness, for it is perfect in itself and entirely detached from anything he has done or can do. Paul not only speaks of blessedness as the result of an imputed righteousness, but he describes the obedience which is thus applied to the sinner, as "without works." This he does the more strongly to assert the truth he defends, and more effectually to secure the honors of This imputed righteousness is "without the law" and "without works," for it represents the work of Christ alone. Such was the doctrine Paul

preached, and such was the faith of the primitive church. But now, in this unbelieving age, the above doctrine is treated with contempt, cashiered obsolete, and considered as imputed nonsense, and so an insult to common sense. But however much it may be hated, Paul's desire was to be "found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." And what Paul so safely confided in, surely ought to be safe grounds for any saved sinner to trust in. This should cause him not to confide in the flesh, or expect justification from his own duties or merits, but raise his mind to superlative holiness and merits and beauties of the "righteousness of God." Paul makes a plain distinction between "mine own righteousness" and the "righteousness of God;" so if we accept one, we must reject the other. And upon one or the other of these all mankind depend, or build their hopes of salvation.

The subject of justification is an "ungodly" person. His pardon and acceptance being not the result of his own obedience; neither as ungodly can he be justified. He must stand right in the eyes of the law, and unreprovable before his Judge, before he can be acquitted in judgment. It must, therefore, be by the righteousness of another. It is only by the righteousness of Christ, or His complete conformity to the "will of Him that sent me," as a voluntary substitute for the ungodly. In no other way can his obedience be made ours, but by imputation; for "by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." In the same way that Adam's offense was made ours, is the obedience of Christ imputed to

us. "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." It is plain, that as Christ the Surety was made sin, so are we made righteous; in the very same way that our sins were made his, does His obedience become ours. Our sins were laid upon Him and His righteousness was laid upon us.

The righteousness by which we are justified is a free gift, "the gift of righteousness," and which believers receive, instead of performing. Christ is called "The Lord our Righteousness." We are "the righteousness of God in Him;" and He is "made unto us righteousness." Sinners are declared to be "justified in Him," "accepted in Him," "complete in Him," and "saved in Him." Such is the divinely appointed method of justification, and such are the rich provisions which grace has made for the complete salvation of guilty, ungodly, and wretched creatures.

The grand design of the gospel is to reveal this glorious righteousness of God to faith, (to those that have faith) and to display the riches of that grace, which provided and so freely bestows the wonderful gift. The gospel informs us that, in regard to justification, what is required of the transgressor was performed by our adorable Substitute. This perfect obedience, therefore, being revealed in the word of truth, it is the business of true faith, not to come in as a condition, not to assert its own importance and share the glory with our Savior's righteousness, but to receive it as absolutely sufficient to justify the most ungodly sinner, and as entirely free for his use. True faith is the receiving of Christ and his righteousness; or, in other words, a full

dependence on Jesus Christalone for eternal salvation; a dependence upon Him as all-sufficient to save the most guilty; as in every way suitable to supply the wants of the most needy, and also as absolutely free to all those who feel themselves sinners. The Redeemer and his finished work are the objects of true faith. To believe in this sense is to trust entirely, and without any reserve, the faithful word which God hath spoken, and the perfect work which Christ hath wrought. Such is the faith of God's elect; and the comfortable evidences of its truth and reality are the love of God and holy obedience, peace of conscience and hope of glory.

How happy are all that are pronounced righteous by the eternal Judge! There is nothing laid to their charge. They are acquitted with full honors to all the perfections of Deity, and everlastingly free from condemnation. Their sins, though ever so numerous, being purged away by atoning blood, and, being vested with that most excellent robe, the Redeemer's righteousness, they are "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." They are presented by their great Representative, "in the body of His flesh through death," holy, unblamable and unreprovable in the sight of God. It is this righteousness, alone, that furnishes a sure foundation for the believer's hopes; and in the imputation of this wonderful blessing grace reigns most gloriously.

This manner of justification is calculated to pull down the pride of the self-righteous professor, who considers himself as standing on more respectable terms with his Maker, than his ungodly neighbor. And it is happily adapted to raise the drooping spirits of the poor, trembling sinner, who has no

good thing of himself to plead. God alone performs the work, and He alone should have all the praise and glory. He is just, yet the justifier of the ungodly. His wisdom has appointed a way for their deliverance; and the infinite riches of His grace has provided effectual means for their full and honorable discharge. Here can all freely come "who labor and are heavy laden," who are wearied with "going about to establish their own righteousness." Nothing is previously required at their hands, but come and take freely. Christ has all you want, however impoverished, and He gives it all with the most liberal hand. But alas! proud man trusts in his own duties and good works for justification, thus ignoring the great atonement for sin, and so despises the righteousness of Christ.

Kind reader, you may well ask yourself what shall be your plea, when called before Him, who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" with any degree of approval, whatever.

CHAPTER VII.

GRACE AS IT REIGNS IN ADOPTION.

Those whom God has justified and admitted into a state of reconciliation with Himself, He has also adopted for His children. Hence their interest in all the blessings of grace and the unknown riches of glory depends upon an indisputable right of inheritance, which they have by virtue of adoption.

The word adoption signifies that act by which a person takes the child of another into his family and treats him as his own child. And that divine adoption, about which we treat, is God's gracious admission of strangers and aliens (by nature) into that relationship and enjoyment of all the privileges of His children through Jesus Christ. As it is written, "I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and my daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Adoption includes regeneration and all those gracious steps taken by God to complete this relation-By spiritual adoption we have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God here below; and by the adoption of the body (redemption; Rom., 8, 23), we have a right to all the blessings of the heirs of God in heaven. In reconciliation God is considered as the injured party, and the sinner as an enemy to Him. In justification our Maker sustains the character of Supreme Judge, and man as a criminal standing before His tribunal. In adoption Jehovah appears as the foundation of honor, and the apostate sons of Adam as belonging to the family of Satan, and "children of wrath." In reconciliation we are made friends; in justification we are pronounced righteous, and in adoption we are considered heirs of the heavenly inheritance.

That true believers are the children of God, the Scriptures expressly declare. They may truly be so called, as they are begotten and born from above, às they stand in a conjugal relation to Christ, and as they are adopted into the heavenly family. These different ways, in which the Scriptures speak of their filial relation to God, are intended to aid our feeble minds when we think upon this grand blessing; one mode of expression supplying, in some degree, the ideas that are wanting in another. To express the source of spiritual life, we are said to be "born of God." To set forth our most intimate union with the "Son of the Highest," we are said to be "married" to Christ. And that we might not forget our former natural state of alienation from God, and to intimate our title to the heavenly patrimony, we are said to "receive the adoption of sons." The condition, therefore, of all true believers is most noble and excellent. Their heavenly birth, their divine Husband, and their everlasting inheritance loudly proclaim it. The beloved apostle, amazed at the love of God manifested in the privileges of adoption, exclaims, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." Here grace reins, for the vessels of mercy were predestinated to the enjoyment of this honor and blessing before the world began. The great "I am" chose them in Christ for His children, not because of any worthiness or merits in them, but of His own sovereign will. As it is written, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace." "The good pleasure of His will," is the eternal source of the heavenly blessing. "By Jesus Christ," is the way of its communication to sinners. "To the praise of the glory of His grace," is the Lord's design in bestowing it.

The persons adopted are sinners of Adam's race; whom considered in their natural state, are estranged from God, guilty before Him, under sentence of death and exposed to ruin. Their translation, therefore, out of this deplorable condition into a state and relationship so glorious is an amazing instance of reigning grace. That the children of wrath (by nature) should become the inheritors of glory, and the slaves of Satan be acknowledged as the sons of Jehovah; that the enemies of God should be adopted into His family and have a right to all the privileges of His children is astonishing to the last degree. Our character and state by nature is the most indigent, wretched and abominable; but by adoption, we are invested with such a character and brought into such a state and relationship as render us fit to associate with saints in light and with angels in glory. What, but Omnipotent, reigning grace, could be sufficient to effect so astonishing and so divine a change? These adopted children are called "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." They are called "kings" and "priests." They bear the most honorable character, and the dignity of their relation is immensely great. Being "the children of God," Jehovah is their Father, Christ acknowledges them for His "brethren," and they are also His "bride." They are the objects of His affection and care; they are the darlings of Providence and all things work together for their good. Nothing can exceed the riches and excellency of that "inheritance" which they have by virtue of adoption—that eternal inheritance which is bequeathed to them by an inviolable testament. Their inheritance includes all the blessings they enjoy here and the full fruition of glory hereafter. Though as to temporal things they may be frequently indigent; yet even temporal blessings are dispensed unto them as God's wisdom sees best. Their "heavenly Father" knoweth that they have need of His providential favors and care, while they continue in this present state. Things temporal, spiritual, eternal, present or future, all are theirs; for they are "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." They "receive the spirit of adoption" and cry with confidence, "Abba, Father." The spirit of adoption, as opposed to the spirit of bondage, is the spirit of light, liberty, consolation and joy.

That sinful mortals, who may justly say to corruption, "Thou art my father," and to the worm, "Thou art my sister," are raised from the "dunghill" to a station so glorious, as the children of God inherit, must be the wonder of the angels. Let the grandees of the earth and sons of the rich (in worldly goods) and mighty boast of their high birth and large revenues, their pompous titles and costly array; yet the poorest peasant, who is a child of God, is incomparably superior to them all. Though

they shine in silk and embroidery, glitter in gold and jewels, a profusion of worldly riches and honors pour into their laps; yet they must soon "lie down in the dust," on a level with the meanest of mortals. But the children of God, however despised and hated by the world, and however much a stranger to earthly riches and honors, yet their names shall stand forever fair in "the book of life." Their "praise is not of men, but of God." Though ever so poor as to this world, the "unsearchable riches of Christ" are theirs. This is felicity which all the wealth of the Indies can not buy. This is honor which all the crowned heads of the world can not confer. Grace, it is thine to raise poor wretched sinners from the dust and their pollution, and number them among the princes of heaven, and seat them on thrones of glory!

The children of God should be very careful to act agreeably to their exalted privilege. They should perform their duties from a principle of love and not like the Pharisee, to gain the applause of men, or acceptance with God. Love to their heavenly Father and gratitude to their bleeding Savior should ever be the fruitful source of their obedience, and the glory of God the exalted end. They should not act as though the work of Christ was not perfect in itself, or not free to the sinner, for that would reflect on His power, faithfulness and grace. Their walk in this life should be as becomes their profession, though they be hated by the world. They are heirs of a kingdom, but it is not of this world. They should often pray for "grace whereby we may serve. God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." And "whatsoever

things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, [the children of God undoubtedly ought, above all others, to] think on these things." For no man can free himself from the odious charge of being a dishonor to Christ and a reproach to the christian profession, if he continually live under the dominion of sin and be a servant of Satan. Such a course of life, whatever may be his pretentions to be a follower of Christ, only proves him a hypocrite and an enemy of God instead of a worshiper.

CHAPTER VIII.

GRACE AS IT REIGNS IN SANCTIFICATION.

Having treated upon that relative change which takes place in the state of God's people, in justification and adoption, we now come to consider that real change, which is begun in sanctification and made perfect in glory. And this real change is absolutely requisite. For though the gospel proclaims Christ as free to the sinner, and though we are considered ungodly when His righteousness is imputed to us; yet before we can enter the mansions of immortal purity, we must be sanctified. While Christ finds His people entirely destitute of holiness, He does not leave them thus; for he raises them up from that condition and implants in their hearts a sincere love to Him and a real pleasure in His ways.

Sanctification occupies a very important position. It is the end of election, a precious fruit of redemption, the primary intention of justification, the scope of adoption and is absolutely necessary to glorification. Its importance appears as the great design of all the divine operations. Hence the word is used to signify that work of divine grace, by which those that are called and justified are renewed after the image of God. It means to set apart, to consecrate to a holy use and also to make holy. It is a divine work, and is not to be begun nor carried on by the power of man. The effect of this glorious work is

true holiness, or a conformity to the moral perfections of the Deity—in other words, love to God and delight in Him as the chief good. "The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart." So, to love the Supreme Being is directly contrary to the bias of corrupt nature. For natural depravity radically consists in our aversion to God, which manifests itself in ten thousand various ways; so the essence of true holiness consists in love to God. This heavenly affection is the fruitful source of all obedience to Him and of all delight in Him, both here and hereafter. All acceptable duties necessarily flow from love to God; nor are they anything else but the necessary expressions of that divine principle.

Justification and sanctification are both blessings of grace and closely connected, yet there is a distinction betwen them. Justification respects the sinner in a legal sense, is a single act of grace and terminates in a relative change; that is, a freedom from punishment and a right to life. Sanctification regards him in a physical sense, is a continued work of grace and terminates in a real change. The former is effected by a righteousness without us; the latter is by holiness wrought within us. That precedes as a cause; this follows as an effect. Justification is by Christ as a priest and has regard to the guilt of sin; sanctification is by Him as a king and refers to sin's dominion. The former annuls sin's damning power, and is instantaneous and complete; but the latter is a progressive holiness and is perfected by degrees, as the Lord perfects His work.

The persons, on whom the blessing of sanctification is bestowed, are those that are justified and in a state of acceptance with God. It is written of them, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." The blessing here designed, and the favor here promised, that love to God and delight in His laws and ways, which are implanted in the hearts of all the regenerate, constantly incline them to obey the whole revealed will of God, so far as they are acquainted with it. Sanctification is a new covenant blessing, and in that gracious constitution it is promised as a choice gift; not something required as an entitling condition. Those happy souls, who possess so invaluable a blessing, are delivered from the dominion of sin and "are not under the law, [not seeking justification by it, or exposed to its curse] but under grace;" are completely justified by the free favor of God and live under its powerful influence. "They that are in the flesh [in their carnal, unregenerate state] can not please God." Every one that is under the law is condemned by it, and while his person is accused his duties can not be accepted. His person must be accepted with God before his works can be pleasing to Him.

All truly good works must be done from a right principle, and this is the love of God. The great commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." Whatever work is done from any other principle, however much it may be applauded by men, is not acceptable in the sight of Him who searches the heart. By Him, principles as well as actions are weighed. And the Scriptures are to be our guide in duty and our rule for obedience. All the good works that man has sought out (and for which there is no Scripture) are condemned by "Who hath required this at your hands?" and are no better than "reprobate silver," and will certainly be rejected. It is

very inconsistent to claim the Bible as a guide in this matter, and at the same time ignore its teachings by practicing things that it says nothing about; for "in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

All good works must be intended right end, and that is the glory and praise of the Supreme Being. "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" is the peremptory command of the Most High. His own glory and praise is the end for which Jehovah, Himself, acts in all His works, both of providence and grace; and it is the highest end at which we can possibly aim. man, however, can act for so grand and sublime an end, unless he is taught of God and fully persuaded that justification is entirely by grace, and in such a sense, by grace, as to be detached from all his works and dependent on no conditions to be performed by himself. For, until then, he can not but refer his supposed good actions, principally to self, and his own acceptance with God. Those works that are truly good, and which the Holy Spirit calls "fruits of righteousness," are in the design of the performer, as well as in the issue, to the glory and praise of God. Now, though an unregenerate man may do those things which are materially good, yet, being ignorant of the "gospel of the grace of God," he can not act from that generous principle, nor for that exalted end, which is absolutely necessary to constitute a good work.

Man in his natural state is a fallen creature, and so far from loving his Maker, or delighting in His ways, that he is an enemy to Him and loves the ways of sin. And while in this state he can not

love God; for love to God is not a production of the natural heart, but a divine principle implanted. And until this love is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, he can not truly love nor praise Him. He must first see something lovely about that glorious Mediator; he must behold his Maker's glory "in the face of Jesus Christ" before he can love Him, or have any true desire to promote His glory. There is the brightest display of all the divine perfections in Jesus Christ, and the gospel reveals Him in His glory and beauty. gospel being a declaration of that perfect forgiveness which is with God, and of that wonderful salvation which is by Christ, which is full, free and everlasting, by whomsoever it is believed, peace of mind and the love of God are in some degree enjoyed. Just in proportion to the believer's views of the divine glory, revealed in Jesus, and his experience of divine love, shed abroad in his heart, there will be returns of affection and gratitude to God, as an infinitely amiable being, and as inconceivably gracious to needy, guilty and unworthy creatures. His language is, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?" and "Bless the Lord, O my soul! and all that is within me bless His holy name!" Being born from above, he "delights in the law of God after the inward man" and is habitually desirous of being more and more conformed to it, for it is a revelation of the Divine will. Being furnished with that generous principle of action (love to God,) the obedience he now performs and which God accepts is (not the service of a mercenary, in order to gain a title to life as a reward for his work; much less of a slave, driven to it by fear, but) the obedience of a

child, or spouse; of one who regards the Divine commands as coming from the Father, or from the Husband. Being "dead to the law" (dead to its damning power) he lives unto God. "Dead to the law" is the case of none but those that are "poor in spirit," those who rely on Christ's work alone, as being all-sufficient to procure their acceptance with God. Of these it is said, "Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ;" and so "are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held." They are dead to the law and the law is dead to them. By which is meant, that the law has no more power over them to exact obedience as a condition of life, or to threaten vengeance against them in case of disobedience, than a deceased husband has to demand obedience from a living wife, or on account of disobedience, to threaten her with punishment. The real Christian, being dead to the law, has no more expectation of justification by his own obedience to it, than a living wife has of assistance from a dead husband; and as she can have no expectation of receiving any benefit from him, he being dead; so she can not rationally have any fears of suffering evil at his hands. The law has lost its damning power, its curses being laid upon Christ; but its moral precepts are left as a guide to his conduct and rule for obedience. And the obedience he now performs is in "newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter," "If a man love me he will keep my words;" but that is not lovewhich is not productive of obedience; nor is that worthy of the name of obedience, which springs not from love. Pretentions to love without obedience is glaring hypocrisy, and obedience without love is

mere slavery. But the tree being first made good, it bears good fruit as a consequence of being first made good.

The great and heavenly blessing of sanctification is the fruit of our union with Christ. In virtue of that union which subsists between Christ as the Head and the church as His covenant body, the chosen of God become subjects of regenerating grace and are possessed of the Holy Spirit. "Without me ye can do nothing," that is truly good and pleasing in His sight. "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one [nature,] for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." This declares who it is that sanctifies and the close relation they bear to Him who does this gracious work. "For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." The sanctified are forever perfected by the perfect work of Christ. By "the blood of the everlasting covenant" they are sanctified; and so are declared to be "sanctified in Christ Jesus." And again, "are sanctified by God the Father" and by His "will through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all"—all of His people.

The above undoubtedly proves that God is the source of sanctification. And if so, how awfully deceived are those who claim to attain that gracious state through their own endeavors. An interest in Christ is not acquired by the sinner but is freely bestowed by God. It is the Lord's work to produce that purity of heart which is the health of the soul; and good works follow and are a beautiful adornment to the christian profession; yea they "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior." "Ye are bought with

a price;" and "by the mercies of God," they are exhorted to live in obedience to Him who has done so much for them. They should serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of their lives, and "live to Him who died for them." The heart that is not moved by such considerations as these to obedience must be destitute of gratitude indeed. "The fear of the Lord" is not the fear of hell, but is that reverential fear of God and of His fatherly chastisements, which His disobedient children are certain to receive. God's commands can not be disobeyed with impunity; for "the Lord shall judge His people" and "visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes."

Sanctification is an internal work, wrought by God's grace, and does not consist in mere morality. Its foundation is laid in regeneration, and is evidenced by hatred of sin, submission to God's will, humility of mind, communion with God, love to Him and a real delight in His ways. The final glorification and complete holiness of all the election of grace is God's last step in this work; for it will complete His gracious design in sending Christ to "save His people from their sins," and brings to our view the whole scope of reigning grace.

Thus we have tried to define sanctification and notice some of its fruits which spring from that gracious seed, which is implanted within the hearts of God's elect. And thus grace, that very grace which provides, reveals and applies the blessings of salvation, is the master that teaches, is the motive which induces and the sovereign which sweetly constrains a believer to deny himself and to walk in the ways of holiness.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NECESSITY AND USEFULNESS OF GOOD WORKS
FURTHER CONSIDERED.

Such is the importance of good works that we further notice some important purposes which are answered by them. Love to God being by regeneration implanted in the heart of a sinner, he is fitted for spiritual communion with Him and His people here below, and for a perfect communion with Him in the world of glory. But the unregenerate soul is absolutely incapable of such pleasures. There must be a spiritual discernment and a heavenly taste before things of this kind can be either enjoyed or truly desired. For while a man continues in his natural state, at enmity with God and in love with sin, he neither has nor can have any real pleasure in "Two can not walk toapproaching his Maker. gether, except they be agreed." Hence it is that our Lord says, "Except a man be born again he can not see the kingdom of God." And the apostle says, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Every subject of regenerating grace loves God, and this love is the grand source of all acceptable obedience and the desire to live right in this life. obedience to the commands of God, we evidence the sincerity of our holy profession. By this our faith is declared genuine before men; who have no other way to conclude that it is unfeigned, but by our works. We doubt the sonship of all those who pretend to love Jesus, who are not careful of their conduct. By a godly conversation, in which our "light shines before men," we edify our brethren and preserve the gospel of God's grace from those reproaches (prove them unfounded) which the world is so ready to cast upon it, as being a licentious doctrine. By walking in the paths of duty, we express our gratitude to God for His benefits and glorify His holy name and adorn His doctrine, which is the great end of all obedience.

The works of faith and the labors of love, which true believers perform, will be remembered by Jesus at the last day—those that are done to the poor, despised members of Christ and for his sake. These will be mentioned at that awful time, as fruits and evidences of their love and union to Him. will distinguish the real Christian from the others. Good works consist in performing our duties to God, duties to our fellow-men and duties to the poor persecuted members of Christ. But it is to be observed that none of these is a condition, or will constitute any part of that righteousness by which we are justified. Such is not the design of good works, for we are "unprofitable servants" at best. We should be careful to distinguish between the foundation of our acceptance with God and practical godliness in this life. Our foundation in dealing with God is alone rich grace and full pardon through Him. our works are to be laid on this foundation. to accept this foundation as already laid and not try to lay a foundation consisting of our works, or try in any way to perfect Christ's work. We must not try

to place our works in the place of Christ's work, our obedience in the place of His obedience, or our duties in the place of His grace. We must keep these things separate and distinct, if we would "rightly divide the word of truth." "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," should be ever remembered while

traveling duty's paths.

The practical part of "pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Here we have duties to the orphans and widows, and duties to ourselves. And there is a blessing in the performance of these things. But the fruits of obedience are not found along the road of disobedience, but chastisements instead; for the Lord shall judge His people and visit their disobedience with the chastening rod. He chastises His people in love, for correction, and "is a rewarder of them that dilligently seek Him." Neither can we join hands with the world in all their religious (?) works, that the Bible says nothing about, and keep free from worldly spots. "The house of prayer" should never be turned into "an. house of merchandise;" nor the church where the sheep of Christ should be fed be considered a factory where Christians can be made; "for the gift of God" (which is "eternal life") can not be bestowed by man, nor peddled out by him. And there are so many gins and snares set to catch men, that we must ever be on our guard. It behooves the Christian to often pray to God for guidance, strength and direction while traveling through this sin-stained world. While the world will ever hate his doctrine, he

should never give them just grounds for hating his morality. Fairness and honesty should characterize all his dealings with all men. He should be very careful with his tongue; for it "is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison," and must be watched. talebearer, tattler and gossiper is despised by all, and is a mischief-making curse to any community. Do not condemn this fault in others and be guilty of it yourself. For the man of God, above all others, should "flee these things." No church can retain such members in her body without suffering therefrom. Also, those that "devour widow's houses" and "grind the faces of the poor," who keep back that which rightly belongs to the needy who labor for them, are heaping up that which "shall eat their flesh as it were fire."

The sin of "covetousness, which is idolatry," is, we fear, much overlooked by many professors. When we hear people, in common, talk about covetousness, we are tempted to think it a mere trifling fault; but it is strongly condemned in God's word. It is the greedy desire for increasing our wealth. The language of a covetous heart is that of the horseleach's daughters, "Give, give." The covetous man is always greedy for more, whether he have little or much, and if a professor, he will always find some pretense to excuse or hide the iniquity of his idolatrous heart. But however safe such a professor may imagine himself to be; yet when mask is removed, it will be seen whether Jehovah mammon swayed his affections and ruled in his heart. The Lord had great reasons for cautioning his followers as follows: "Take heed and beware of covetousness;" for "the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

He who claims to have the love of God in his heart, and to be a christian, should be very careful to manifest the sincerity of that claim by suitable conduct. The Bible contains many exhortations, commands and directions to the Lord's people for right living, and these should be heeded. The morality of the Bible is in plain sight, so that even the unregenerate would be greatly benefitted by taking heed thereto; for morality is commendable in all. My limited space forbids further consideration of this important subject.

CHAPTER X.

GRACE AS IT REIGNS IN THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS UNTO ETERNAL GLORY.

It appears from the preceding chapters, that the state of true believers is highly exalted, and their privileges are of infinite worth. We have seen how grace reigns, and her exceeding riches are manifested in election, etc. We now come to consider the saints perseverance. This is a very important subject; for they are naturally led to enquire what provisions the Lord has made to secure their expected bliss. Grace performs great things for the sinner here, and the same grace reigns until he is safely housed in heaven.

The saints (and the best of them, too) are very unstable and impotent creatures in themselves. Their weaknesses are many and great, and their foes (both within and without) are exceedingly strong and numerous; so if they were left to themselves, they would certainly fall. But these very same persons can do all things "through Christ strengthening them." They shall not only come off victorious, but "more than conquerors, through Him," over all their enemies. This need not appear strange when we consider that omnipotent Grace reigns—that the love, power, wisdom and faithfulness of God is employed in this work. The "love

of God" is engaged for their everlasting security. Having chosen them to life and happiness as a primary fruit of His own eternal favor, that love must abate, or His purpose be rendered void, before they can finally fall. But if the "Lord of Hosts hath purposed, who shall disannulit?" If "His hand [be] stretched out [for the execution of his gracious designs,] who shall turn it back "before the end be accomplished? For as He has "thought, so shall it come to pass," and as He has "purposed, so shall it stand." His love never abates; for He rests and takes the highest delight in the exercise of His love for His elect people. Such is Jehovah's delight in this people that He "rejoices over them" and takes pleasure in doing them good. His love is unchangeably fixed upon them, though the manifestations of that love to them often vary. But while infinite wisdom is capable of directing and almighty power of executing His gracious purposes towards them, they shall never perish: agreeable to which, we hear the apostle exulting in God's immutable love and positively affirming that nothing in the heights above, nor in the depths beneath; nothing present nor future; not even life or death, should be able to effect a separation.

"The mighty power of God" is also engaged on the behalf of all those "begotten again to a lively hope." They are kept by it, as in a garrison, through faith unto salvation. Omnipotence is their protection, and omniscience their guide. Jehovah has "abounded in all wisdom and prudence," in framing the stupendous plan and choosing suitable means to attain the wonderful end. Those "exceeding great and precious promises," which God has. made, afford strong consolation respecting this matter. For the Father of mercies has declared that "He will never leave them, nor forsake them," nor suffer them to be "plucked out" of His hand. will "confirm them to the end, and preserve them to His kingdom," so that they "shall never depart from Him." And the reason is, not because they are better than other people, but because the Lord has chosen them to be His own "peculiar people." The Lord will not forsake His people, but will preserve them for His great name's sake; "because it hath pleased the Lord to make you His people." These promises, with many others of a similar kind, "are yea and amen," and are made and unalterably confirmed "in Christ Jesus." Divine faithfulness is pledged in them, and infinite power is engaged to perform them. These "precious promises" were made by Him "that can not lie;" to which He has annexed, amazing to think, His solemn oath, with this special design, that every sensible sinner "might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Now, the purpose and the oath of God are the "two immutable things," which declare their salvation certain.

Jehovah's covenant with His people in Christ affords glorious attestation to this wonderful truth. That covenant is "ordered in all things," stored with heavenly promises, replete with "spiritual blessings," and is absolutely sure. For "they shall be my people, and I will be their God." The stability of the new covenant is asserted in the strongest terms. Its gracious language is testamentary. It consists of absolute promises, requires no condition to be

performed by man, and is perpetual. That sovereign Being, who can not lie, declares in the strongest manner that those who are included in this covenant shall not "depart from Him," and that He will "never cease to do them good." Security, greater than this, is not to be conceived, nor can it possibly be had. The faithfulness and inviolable veracity of God give strong assurance of the saints' perseverance. faithfulness and veracity in performing His promises are unchangable and eternal. The "Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you and keep you from [the destructive power of every] evil." Yea, He hath "sworn by His holiness that my covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my mouth," and that He will not "suffer His faithfulness to fail." So, that if there be immutability in the counsel of God, if any stability in His covenant, if any fidelity in His promises, the true believer shall certainly be perserved. Grace has laid the basis of their confidence and consolation firm and strong. is just as true now as it ever was, that His sheep shall never perish, nor be plucked out of the Father's hand.

The merits of the Redeemer's blood strongly argue their preservation and heighten their assurance of it. For, is it probable that He who so loved them, as to give His life a ransom for them; that He who suffered such tortures of body and horrors of soul for them, and in their stead; that he who drank the very dregs of the cup of wrath, on purpose that joy and bliss might be their portion forever—is it possible, I ask, that he should ever suffer those, who are in the most emphatic sense His own "peculiar people," His purchased people and His own

property, to be taken from him by craft or power, and that, too, by His great enemy? Such an event would be highly injurious to the Savior's character. He who underwent so much for them in the garden and on the cross, who bore the curse and suffered the pains of death (in its worst form) in their stead, even while they "were enemies" and "ungodly," will certainly protect them now, after they are reconciled and become His friends. While there is compassion in His heart, and power in His hand; while His name is "Jesus," and his work "salvation." He must certainly "see of the travail of His soul, and be [completely] satisfied." It can not be that one soul for whom He gave His life and spilt His blood, whose sins He bore and whose curse He sustained, shall ever perish. We should not forget who it was that said, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him who sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." To assert that any of these will miss heaven would be a blasphemous reflection against the character of Christ.

The intercession of Christ for His people, in the heavenly sanctuary, affords another proof of this glorious truth. This intercession is founded upon His perfect atonement for all their sins, and is a firm foundation for that purpose. His intercession is always effectual and affords the highest security. For their Redeemer is strong. The Lord of Hosts is His name. He shall thoroughly plead their cause." And as every true believer is interested in this intercession, so Jesus, their advocate, is never denied in His suit. His plea is always valid and always

effectual, because the Father "heareth Him always."

That ineffable union which subsists Christ and His people testifies further to their final perseverance. Every believer is a member of that mystical body, of which Christis the Head; so while there is life in the Head, the members shall never die. He who rules over all, with an unremitting regard for His church, declares concerning His people, "Because I live, ye shall live also." His life, as Mediator, is the cause and support of theirs. As it is written, "Christ who is our life," and "your life is hid with Christ in God." Their life is "hid," like the most valuable treasure, in a secret place. "With Christ:" They are committed to His guardianship and lodged under His care, who is abundantly able to keep that which is intrusted to His hands. "In God:" The bosom of the Almighty is the sacred repository, in which the jewels are so safely kept. They are "bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord their God," and that union can not be broken. For "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit," connected with Him, and therefore absolutely inseparable.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit furnishes further proof of this glorious doctrine. He is "in them a well of water springing up into everlasting life," and this kind of a well never goes dry. As a guide and a comforter, He is given to "abide with them forever." His design in regeneration is their complete holiness and everlasting happiness. His gracious purpose in taking up His residence in them is to fit them for sublimer enjoyments, to secure their perseverance, to guard them through life and conduct them to glory. By Him they are "sealed to

the day of redemption." And He is "the earnest of their inheritance"—that which given as a pledge gives assurance of the whole.

The true believer's soul or spirit possesses eternal life now, as a result of regeneration. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." So that with good reasons, we may conclude with Paul, that whenever God begins "a good work, He will [certainly] perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." For He that formed the universe is not such an inconsiderate builder, as to lay the foundation of a sinner's complete happiness. in His own eternal purpose and the blood of His Son, and then leave His work unfinished. No, it shall never be said in truth by His enemies, that God "began to build and was not able to finish" His work.

In answer to the objection, that if the preservation of believers depends upon God alone they need have no occasion to be at all careful how they live, we will say, that the strength of this objection was long ago tried by Satan, upon the Lord Himself. But as it appeared of no force to Him, though the tempter proposed it as the necessary consequence of those promises made by the Father to Christ, respecting His preservation; so it appears to have as little weight in the present case. The devil's main argument was, that if Christ "be the Son of God," His angels will certainly preserve Him; so that He might cast Himself from that high pinacle without the least danger. So, it is argued that if your perseverance be certain, you need not fear to cast your-

self headlong into sin. But as Christ rejected Satan's proposal with the utmost abhorrence, knowing it was a temptation to evil and that Satan's argument was an abuse of the Scriptures; so with the true believer, though fully persuaded that grace reigns in every part of his salvation, and so strongly appears in God's special care over His people; yet he is well convinced that he must not "continue in sin, that grace may abound." On every such suggestion, therefore, he will from his heart say, "God forbid!" Besides, there are many important purposes answered by walking in the paths of practical godliness and obedience, respecting the Christian himself, his neighbor and his God. We have already considered some of these as fully as our limited space would permit. But we must say, that as long as any one believes in the possibility of apostasy, (in the sense that the children of God may go to hell,) just that long their confidence can not be implicitly in Christ; for as long as they expect heaven upon conditions to be performed by themselves, they can not rely wholly and solely on Him for salvation.

The saints are exhorted to pray for continual aids of grace and divine support in time of trial. And this is objected against the doctrine for which we are pleading. But Christ was absolutely sure of again enjoying that happiness which He had with the Father before the world was; nor could He possibly fail of enjoying the glory and joy promised Him as Mediator and Savior; Yet He prayed for it with more fervor than any saint can possibly do, for the most desirable blessing, and thereby has set us a noble example. It is both a duty and a privilege to pour out our wants to God in prayer. The "golden vials"

full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints," are ever pleasing in His sight. The believer who is careless in his walk and duties has just room for doubting his sonship, and will surely bring the Lord's chastening rod upon himself, for such disobedience. The child of God should ever try to live as becometh his profession, "that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed."

Happy then, thrice happy are they who are under the reign of grace! Every attribute of Deity is engaged to promote their felicity. All the eternal councils terminate in their favor; And Providence, in the whole course of events, representing them, has a special regard to their advantage. This divine grace appears and reigns in the final perseverance of all true believers, even all the election of grace. For grace provides the means necessary to it; grace applies them; and omnipotent grace crowns them with success, to its own eternal honor and praise.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST, BY WHOM GRACE REIGNS.

The person of Jesus Christ, considered in connection with His work, is a copious and exalted subject. For His person is dignified with every excellency, divine and human; and His work includes every requisite for the complete salvation of guilty and lost sinners. The constitution of our Mediator's wonderful person was an effect of infinite wisdom and a manifestation of boundless grace. The union of His divine and human nature is a fact of great importance to our hopes of eternal happiness. For by the personal union of these two natures, He is rendered capable of performing the work of a Mediator between God and man. If He had not possessed a nature inferior to that which is divine, He could neither have performed the obedience required, nor suffered the penalty threatened by the holy law; both of which were absolutely necessary to the salvation of sinners. His mere assumption of a created nature would have been insufficient. For the law being given by man, the obedience required by it was to be performed by man, a real, thorough, sinless Besides, the wisdom and equity of the Supreme Lawgiver would not have appeared in giving a law to our species, if it had never, so much as in one instance, been honored with perfect obedience by

any in our nature. As man had become a transgressor of the law, under its curse and bound to suffer eternal misery, it was necessary that He, who should undertake his deliverance by victorious sufferings, should be Himself a man. It would not have appeared agreeable, that a different nature, from that which sinned, should suffer for sin. having lost his happiness, was the creature to be redeemed; and humanity, having lost its excellence, was the nature to be restored. So it was necessary that redemption and restoration should be effected in the human nature. "For as by the disobedience of one [man] many were made sinners, [brought under condemnation and liable to eternal death] even so by the obedience of one [man, Jesus Christ, must] many be made righteous;" must be delivered from condemnation and accepted to everlasting life. It was necessary also that the human nature of Christ, in which He was to accomplish our deliverance, should be delivered from the common root and fountain of it in our first parents, and that He who should sustain the character and perform the work of a Redeemer should be our "near" kinsman, one to whom the right of redemption belonged. So it was declared in the first promise, "The seed of the woman [and no other] shall bruise the serpent's head." He was to partake of our nature by being born "of a woman," and thus become our kinsman and brother. For, "both He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one [nature:] for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." What amazing condescension, that the "Son of the Highest" should become the child of a virgin; that He should become the seed of her, who with

bold, presumptuous hand plucked the fatal fruit, which entailed death on all our species; that He, whom angels adore, should appear in our nature, when we were sunk in ruin, that He might obey, bleed and die for our deliverance! What words can express; what hearts can conceive the depth of that condescension and the riches of that grace, which appear in such a procedure?

It was also necessary that the nature, in which the work of redemption was to be performed, should be so derived as not to in any way be tainted with sin or moral defilement, which we all possess as the descendants of Adam. It behooves us to have such a high priest, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners;" for as priest He was to atone for sins and ransom us from the law's curse. If Christ had partaken in any degree of sin, this would have tainted His atonement, so that it would not have been perfect. So Christ was conceived in such a manner as to be entirely without sin. His humanity was of perfect purity; and so the rectitude of His heart and sanctity of His life was unspotted, perfect and complete.

Our whole human nature subsisted in Adam, who was our public representative; and so his transgression is justly imputed to us. In him we all sinned, and being the natural descendants of an apostate head, we bear that awful character— "by nature the children of wrath." But Adam was not a federal head to Christ. "The Lord from heaven" was neither included in him, nor represented by him; for the blessed Jesus was conceived in a way entirely supernatural and born of a virgin. Adam only represented his natural descendants, and was

"of the earth, earthy;" so he could not be the representative of the "Son of God," the "only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Original guilt became ours by virtue of Adam's relation to us, and so it is justly imputed to us. It is not the imputation of his transgression that makes it ours; but being legally ours, because of our natural and federal relation to him, it is justly imputed to us. So we derive a corrupt nature from him, because we were guilty with him. But the immaculate Jesus was not concerned with Adam in original guilt, not having descended from him according to the common course of nature. And thus was Christ's human nature entirely free from all contamination. So that "holy thing" conceived in the virgin Mary, by the power of the Most High, is called the "creation of a new thing in the earth." And in this way Christ (who is called the "last Adam" in opposition to the first) became a partaker of the nature which had sinned, without the least sinfulness of that nature.

It was further absolutely necessary that our Mediator and Surety should be God as well as man. A mere dependent creature, however pure and spotless, could never have redeemed one soul; for it owes perpetual obedience to God as a creature, and its obedience, therefore, could not be transferred to another. Whoever, therefore, should undertake that "obedience," by which "many shall be made righteous," must not be obliged to obedience on his own account. Consequently, our Surety must be a divine Person; and as our situation required, so the gospel reveals a Mediator and Substitute, thus exalted and glorious. This leads us to a distinction of persons in the Godhead. While this distinction

the Scriptures plainly reveals, it as plainly declares that they are "one" God. This is a mystery that no man can explain; but it is just as true as if our feeble minds could comprehend this puzzling, but We behold the rights of Deity sublime truth. asserted and vindicated, with infinite majesty and authority, in the Person of the Father; while we view every divine perfection displayed and honored in the most illustrious manner, by the amazing condescension of the eternal Son. We behold Him who, in His lowest state of humiliation, could claim an equality with God. Though He was Lord of all, yet he "took upon Him the form of a servant." Though He was Jehovah, yet as His Son, He was "made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law."

The necessity that our surety should be a divine Person further arises by considering the infinite evil that there is in sin. Every crime is more or less heinous in proportion as we are under obligations to the contrary. The obligations we are under to love, honor and obey any person is in proportion to their loveliness, dignity and authority. And as infinite beauty, dignity and authority belong to the immensely glorious God, we must be under equal obligations to love, honor and obey Him; and a contrary conduct must be infinitely criminal. Sin, therefore, is a violation of infinite obligation to duty; consequently, it is an unlimited evil and deserving infinite punishment. Such being the nature of our offences and of the aggravations attending them, we stand in absolute need of a surety, the worth of whose obedience and sufferings would at least be equal to the unworthiness of our persons and to the demerit of our disobedience. If, to the evil there is in every sin, we take into consideration the vast number of sinners that were to be redeemed, the countless number of enormous crimes that were to be expiated, and the infinite weight of divine wrath that was to be sustained (all of which was to be completed in a short time, in order to reconcile the sinners to God and effect their eternal salvation) we shall have very strong evidence, that Christ should be a divine Person. And the names He bears, the perfection ascribed to him, the works He has done and the honors He has received, loudly proclaim His eternal Divinity.

It was necessary that our Surety should be God and man, in unity of person. This necessity arises from the nature of His work, which is that of a Mediator between God, the offended Sovereign, and man, the offending subject. If He had not been partaker of the divine nature, He would not have been qualified to treat with God; if not of the human, He would not have been fitted to treat with Deity alone was too high to treat with man; humanity alone was too low to treat with God. Son of God, therefore, took upon Himself our nature, that He might become a middle person; and so be rendered capable of "laying His Hands upon both" and bringing them into a state of perfect friendship. Such is the constitution of this wonderful person who is called, not manuel, or man with us, but God with us," or God in our "Emmanuel. own nature.

The perfect performance of His offices, as priest, prophet and king, requires this union of the divine nature to the human nature. As a priest, it

was necessary He should have "something to offer." But pure Deity could not be offered. It was requisite, therefore, that He should be man and be taken from among men, as every other high priest was. Had he not been God, He would not have had absolute power over His own life, to lay it down and to take it up again. And the offering of the humanity, if not in union with the divinity, would not have made a perfect atonement or satisfaction for that enormous load of human guilt, for which He was to suffer. But when we consider that He who suffered "the just for the unjust," was a divine Person, incarnate, we look upon Him as perfectly able in every way to fully perform the work. The worth of His obedience and sufferings are equal to the dignity of His person; yet His Deity did not suffer, but suffering humanity was supported by His Deity. And as so great and transcendently glorious are the perfections of Jehovah, equally so is the atonement of "the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

As a prophet: For had He not been the omniscient God, He could not, without a revelation, have known the divine will respecting His people; nor could He have had a perfect acquaintance with that infinite variety of cases, in which, through every age and nation, they continually need his teachings. And if he had not been man, He could not, so familiarly and in His own human person, have revealed the divine will.

As a king: For if he had not been God, He could not have ruled in the heart, or been Lord of conscience, nor been able to defend and provide for His church in this sinful world. Neither could He, in His own right, have given eternal life to all those

the Father gave Him, or inflicted everlasting death on his and their enemies. In His humanity, He sympathizes with all the members of His mystical body. His wonderful person is dignified with every perfection, divine and human; and as he possesses all the glories of Deity, and all the graces of immaculate humanity, they render Him a Mediator completely amiable and supremely glorious—an adequate object of the sinner's confidence, and the believer's joy.

Hence we see that Jesus Christ is a glorious, divine Mediator; one that has power with God and with man. He is, therefore, able "to save to the uttermost [to all perfection and forever] all that come to God by Him." His obedience alone is worth far more than all the obedience of all the saints and angels combined.

As the greatness of an offense is proportioned to the dignity of the person whose honor is invaded by it, so the value of the satisfaction made by the sufferings of any substitute must be equal to the excellency of the person satisfying. Sin, being committed against infinite majesty, deserved infinite punishment; so the sacrifice of Christ is of infinite worth being offered by a person of infinite dignity. was the sacrifice of Jesus, the incarnate God; of Him who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and head over all creation. And as the infinite glory of His divine person can not be separated from His humanity, so infinite merit is necessarily attached to His obedience and sufferings. In all that he did, in all that He underwent, He was the Son of God; as well while on the cross, as before His incarnation; as well when He cried, "My God, My God, why hast

Thou forsaken me?" as when He raised the dead, and reversed the laws of nature. He was Jehovah's "fellow," when He was fastened to the bloody tree and expired under a curse. Yes, Jehovah considered our surety, as man, His fellow, when He smote Him, and we should consider Him under the same exalted character, when we believe on Him and plead His atonement before God. Here is firm footing; here is the solid, unmoveable rock of the sinner's hope.

Here let the reader wonder, admire, and adore the love of the eternal Father, and the condescension of the divine Son. Christ is a gift of the Father to His people. "God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The condescension of Christ is indeed wonder-That He, "who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God," should be made flesh and "take upon Him the form of a servant," perform obedience, and give up Himself to the most infamous death, is amazing! But that He should surrender Himself, to die for sinners, for enemies, for such as were in actual rebellion against Him, is unspeakably more amazing! These are demonstrative proofs that the Lord, Redeemer, is as much superior to His creatures in the riches of His grace as in the depths of His wisdom, or the works of His power. Let all the heavens adore Him! and let poor sinners be filled with wonder, and their hearts burn with gratitude! For this glorious Redeemer is accessible by them, was designed for them, and on them His power and grace is magnified.

Fully persuaded, therefore, that the Scriptures mean as they speak, let the sinner, who is conscious of nothing but misery and wretchedness about him, flee to the all-sufficient Mediator; trust in Him as mighty to save; and veracity itself has engaged that he shall not be disappointed in his expectations. For this Mediator is perfectly able to act agreeably to every character He bears; perfectly qualified to execute every office He has undertaken, and completely fitted to fill up each relation in which He stands to His people. Let us repose the most unreserved confidence in His atonement and intercession, as our priest; look to him for instruction, as our prophet; and be subject to Him and expect protection from Him as our King. Let us manifest the most fervent love to Him, as our Redeemer, yield him the most cordial obedience, as our Lord, and pay Him the sublimest worship, as our God.

CHAPTER XII.

THE WORK OF CHRIST, THROUGH WHICH GRACE REIGNS.

"Grace reigns through righteousness." This righteousness is the whole of that obedience, by which "many shall be made righteous." Through this obedience, grace reigns in a way strictly conformable to the rights of divine justice. By this most perfect work of Christ, the tenderest mercy is manifested to miserable sinners, and meets with the truth of Jehovah's righteous threatenings against sin. Here the righteousness of God, as the Lawgiver, appears in taking vengeance on sin, so as to be productive of substantial and lasting peace to the sinner. Happy expedient! and wonderful grace!

As to its nature, it is a complete conformity to the divine law. Whatever the precepts of Jehovah's law demanded, the adorable Jesus performed to its fullest requirement. His nature being perfectly holy, the principle of His actions were absolutely pure; the end for which He did them was entirely right, and the matter of them and rule of their performance were justifying, without any defect. Whatever punishment the broken law threatened, He submitted to, in all its dreadful severity. For He was "made to be sin;" and He was "made a curse." He suffered the greatest shame and the

most excruciating pain that the malice of men, instigated by Satan, could inflict; and also, that which was infinitely more, the wrath of God. The infinite dignity of His person was a full compensation for the comparative short time that He suffered. For He was the "Son of God" and "Lord of Glory," the "everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace."

The excellencies of this righteousness appears from the character it bears in the Bible. To signify its unspotted purity, it is called "fine linen, clean and white." To denote its completeness, it is called a "robe." To set forth its exquisite beauty, richness and glory, it is called "clothing of wrought gold" and "raiment of needle-work." To point out its unequaled excellency, it is called the "best robe." It is far better than the robe of innocence, which our first parents wore before the fall; yea, better than the righteousness of the angels. For theirs is but the obedience of mere creatures—of dependent beings. But this is "the righteousness of God." Its nature and properties are such, that the Lord seems to glory in it, frequently calling it "His righteousness." It is "an everlasting righteousness;" it is a robe, the beauty of which shall never be tarnished, a garment that will never decay and clothing that will never wear out. When millions of ages have run their round, it will continue the same that it was the first day it came into use. And when millions more are elapsed, there will be no alteration. The continuance of its efficacy, beauty and glory will be lasting as the eternal inheritance. And it is a righteousness already performed. It is not something wrought by us, or in us by the operation of the Holy Spirit. No. it was completed when the divine Redeemer cried "It is finished" and gave up the Ghost. But here many persons fall into a fatal mistake. Ready they are to imagine, that sinners are accepted of God by virtue of righteousness wrought in them and by them, through the assistance of the Holy Spirit; which assistance, they suppose, was purchased for them by the death of Christ. But when the blessed Jesus died, He did not just do something to assist our weak but willing endeavors to save ourselves; He did not simply lay in a provision of grace, or purchase the Spirit for us, by which the defects of our enfeebled nature might be rendered capable of performing the conditions of justification. But at that awful period, when He bowed His head and expired, He by Himself, alone and unaided, perfectly finished that satisfaction for sin, which is the proper condition and the grand requisite of our justification. That the Spirit of grace and truth, as given to any, is a precious fruit of the death, resurrection and glorification of Christ is freely acknowledged; but that He died to purchase the Spirit, to work in us any part of that righteousness, on account of which we are accepted of God, must be denied. For if we ascribe to Christ all the praise, honor and glory, we must leave ourselves out, and declare that He alone does all the work. The Spirit's work is to regenerate, previous to which, the sinner is "in the flesh [and that is why he] can not please God," while in that condition; it is to "testify of me;" "for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you;" it "beareth witness with our spirit;" it reveals the deep things of God unto us, etc. The sensible sinner is ever mindful of the defects attending his own

best performances. And his mind will be beclouded and he will fail to see that perfect righteousness of God, so long as he thinks that his own obedience is necessary to perfect Christ's work. This glorious righteousness is absolutely free to the sinner. was wrought, designed and freely bestowed on the vilest of sinners. It is not a matter of bargain, or the subject of sale. It is not offered on certain conditions, as the performing of certain works, or attaining certain qualifications; but it is an absolutely free gift. Grace, as a sovereign, is exalted to confer it, and grace we know deals only with the unworthy. As a gift it is imparted; as a gift therefore it is to be received. And for such a free gift, the possessor should be thankful. Yes, disconsolate sinner, heaven proclaims your welcome to Christ; and eternal faithfulness insures acceptance to all that believe in Him. And believing in Christ is opposed to a trust in all works and doings of every kind. is the receiving of Christ and His righteousness, or a full dependence on Him alone for salvation. And the only obedience, by which there is favor with God, is already performed.

That righteousness, by which sinners are justified, consists of the whole of that obedience by which Christ, as a surety, performed the "Father's will," and endured all those bitter sufferings, which He underwent while here in the flesh, and was completed when He arose a victorious conqueror over death and the grave. This obedience is as perfect as divine rectitude could require, and as excellent as eternal wisdom could devise.

By comparing what Paul says about the "right-eousness of faith" being opposed to the "righteous-

ness of the law," we see that whoever thinks of doing any work, as the condition of life, is ignorant of that obedience which the gospel reveals. He is ignorantly "going about to establish his own righteousness," or grounds of acceptance with God. Let the convicted sinner look up from himself to that adorable Sponsor, and admire His righteousness. Who, that is taught of God, would not, with Paul, desire to be found in it? and praise the grace that provided and Savior that wrought it; seeing He ever lives to make the application of His work? For, because He thus lives, "we shall be saved by His life."

All other kinds of righteousness, in comparison with Christ's, is quite insignificant; and if set in competition with it, is viler than dross and worse than nothing. In God's glorious righteousness, Christians of all ages have gloried, both while living and dying, as the only ground of their hopes. In this most perfect obedience, believers are now exalted and the saints in heaven triumph; for the work of the blessed Jesus is the burden of their songs. After all that has been written or said about it by prophets or apostles, here on earth; after all that has been sung or can be conceived by saints or angels, in the world of glory, the "righteousness of God" exceeds all possible praise.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CONSUMATION OF THE GLORIOUS REIGN OF GRACE.

Divine grace is glorious in itself, and infinitely superior to all that is denominated free favor among men; as the way in which it reigns is absolutely without parallel, and the end of its benign government is equally glorious. This glorious end is the great design of God in manifesting His grace towards His people. It is an everlasting state of complete holiness and consumate happiness in the presence of God—the full enjoyment of heaven, with all that heaven means. To this blissful state, grace, as a sovereign, infallibly brings her subjects, through the person and work of Emmanuel.

To assist our feeble minds in forming some faint ideas of celestial blessedness, and by whom enjoyed, it is compared by sacred writers to the most delightful and glorious things that come under our notice, in the present world. To denote its superabounding delights, it is called "paradise," in allusion to the garden of Eden; for at God's "right hand there are pleasures for evermore." To signify its grandure, magnificence and glory, it is called a "crown" and a "kingdom." As a crown, it is unfading and incorruptible. To intimate that none shall enjoy it, except in virtue of the Redeem-

er's obedience, it is called a "crown of righteousness." It is also called a "crown of life" and a "crown of glory." As a kingdom, it was prepared for believers "from the foundation of the world," and is the "kingdom of their Father" who bestows it upon them. It is an everlasting kingdom, and those that enjoy it are called "kings," and they "sit upon thrones," and "reign in life," plainly showing that none but the children of God shall enjoy it; for a servant, considered as such, can not inherit it. We must, therefore, be the sons of the Highest by regeneration, before we can hope to enjoy the heavenly patrimony. For however diligent the sons of God may be in keeping His commandments and in performing His will, they shall not possess it under the notion of a reward of duty, or as wages for work, but as a testamentary gift. It is a gift by way of legacy, and is bequeathed to them by the "everlasting covenant" or testament of our Lord Jesus Christ. This kingdom is most glorious, and the inheritance is most free to the children of God, who, even in this life, times enjoy a foretaste of "things not seen" and "rejoice with joy unspeakable." They "live by faith" in a once dead, but now risen and highly exalted Redeemer, as their Surety, sacrifice, righteousness and Advocate, and view the stability of the promise, covenant and oath of Jehovah; so they have great assurance, that "when Christ who is our life shall appear," they also shall "appear with Him in glory.,;

The future happiness of believers may be considered, either as it is enjoyed by the separate spirit before the resurrection and the last judgment, or by

the soul and body united, after that awful period has come and those grand events have taken place. separate spirits of the saints possess thought and consciousness, and enjoy ineffable bliss in communion with Jesus; for as soon as that mysterious union, which subsists between soul and body, in the present state, is disolved by death, the soul is set free and immediately enters into glory. It has partaken of Christs righteousness in the new birth, when eternal life was given to it by the Spirit. So it is said to be born of an "incorruptible seed" and, therefore, "can not sin." Death of the body is the gate by which the heaven-born soul is set free and so enters the heavenly mansion prepared for it; in the possession of which it enjoys delights that could not be experienced in this mortal state. The knowledge of this blessedness caused Paul to "desire to depart and be with Christ." But the souls of the wicked at death do not enter this state of blessedness; for "ve must be born again," while on earth, before we can enter that kingdom of immortal glory.

The soul-sleeping idea, that the spirit must continue for a long time insensible; even until the voice of Omnipotence and the alarming crash of a falling world shall awaken its drowsy powers into a second enjoyment of itself and its God is not taught in the Bible. Jesus said to the penitent thief, "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." And the day was half spent when he said those gracious words. Christ and Stephen commended their spirits unto God just previous to the death of their bodies; and many have thus prayed unto Him for his reception of their spirits. John saw "under the alter the souls of them that were slain,"

which proves that they were far from sleeping in the grave.

The separated spirits of saints, therefore, being lodged in eternal mansions and abiding at the source of all felicity, enjoy inconceivable pleasures. They are completely released from all troubles of every kind, from all sins and sufferings, from all temptations and sorrows. Evil with all its attendants never enter those bright abodes. The garments of the inhabitants are always white, being clothed with Christ's perfect righteousness; and their harps are always tuned. Being with Christ, they behold His glory and are delighted with His beauty. The infinite excellencies of Jesus, the incarnate Jehovah, are illustriously displayed in that exalted state. Those divine perfections, of which we now can only form some faint conceptions, beam forth on the holy and happy saints in a blaze of glory. With adoring gratitude and pleasing astonishment they reflect: This is He that once raised a feeble cry in the stable at Bethlehem; This is He (but, O how changed!) who was a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" who, under every mark of infamy and under the severest sensations of pain of soul and body, died to accomplish our salvation. To view Him eye to eye, who is their husband and Head, after all the abasement and misery to which He submitted on their account, thus exalted and glorified must fill their souls with ecstatic bliss. Nor, are they mere spectators of His glorious exaltation; for He entertains and rejoices over them as His friends and brethren, as His "bride" and "portion." He was very friendly with His people while here on earth, and as His love knows no change, He does not now

keep them at a distance, but takes them into a state of exaltation with Himself.

Being favored with a more perfect knowledge of God, and their intellectual powers abundantly strengthened, and with more intimate communion with the "Great Shepherd of the sheep," their love to Him is proportionately strengthened. That grace which reigned in their whole salvation, being discerned by them in a stronger light, inflames them with the most ardent love to its adorable Author, and to Jesus by whom it reigned. All the amiable and infinite perfections of Deity shining upon them, in the light of glory, their bosoms can not but glow with the utmost fervor. They can not but make returns of love in such a manner, as is suited to their happy and exalted state.

Their bodies being quickened by the same Spirit, raised in glory and re-united to their immortal spirits, will not only be a demonstration of God's power and a display of His goodness, very wonderful in their eyes, but also an addition to their blessedness. While the bodies of the departed saints are confined to the grave, the happy spirits in glory can not be ignorant, that something must be wanting to complete their consumation of glory. But by the resurrection, death itself, which is the last enemy, shall be destroyed, never more to have the least power over them in any way. That the dead shall be raised is a fundamental article of the Christian creed. The same bodies shall be raised, which fell by death; but they shall be changed and fitted for the exalted state into which they shall be introduced, when raised in glory. "Flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom of God;" for the glory

thereof is too insupportably bright and dazzling for it to sustain. But when that which was "sown in corruption;" when that which was "sown in dishonor and weakness," shall be raised in "glory" and "power;" when this "corruptible shall put on incorruption" and this "mortal shall put on immortality"—in a word; when that which was "sown a natural body" shall be "raised a spiritual body," it will then be capable of partaking in the employment and bliss of heaven. When the bodies of believers shall be raised by almighty power and fashioned by infinite wisdom, like unto the glorious body of Christ, they will be fit companions for their souls to all eternity. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun [both in body and soul] in the kingdom of their Father." Then shall the body, which partook in the sorrows and sufferings of this world, which suffered various hardships and acts of violence, be a partaker of the joys of that triumphant state. Yes, the earthly tabernacle, being also the purchase of redeeming blood, and the temple of the Holy Ghost, in this life, shall then be bright as the sun, vigorous with celestial youth, and undecaying as the power that shall support it. We can not form an adequate idea of the nature and excellence of a "spiritual body;" nor can we declare the power and grace exercised and manifested towards the children of men, in raising their sleeping dust, and in forming their bodies like unto the glorious body of Christ, for an eternal world. Here we must leave them, for "it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." We shall certainly be "satisfied" with the amazing

alteration, "when we awake" from the sleep of death in the "likeness" of our adorable Savior.

Another thing that will add to the blessedness of saints, at that day, is their public acquittal by Jesus, when standing before His tribunal. "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him." Infinitely grand and majestic, and with innumerable angels, He approaches. The brightness of ten thousand suns are lost in the blaze of His glory, as He ascends the great, white throne. The Judge, inflexibly just and immensely glorious, ascends the tribunal, and before his presence "the heavens and earth flee away." The innumerable millions of creatures that people the universe are now assembled. The "books are opened." The wicked, with trembling hands and throbbing hearts, with terror in their aspect, and damnation in view, would be glad to lose their being; but the righteous are joyful and intrepid; for the Judge is their Friend. The righteousness in which they appear was wrought out by Him. The plea which they make, He will not reject; for it is his obedience and blood which was shed to atone for their sins, and the promise He made to comfort their hearts under the expectation of this awful event. There they stand, not to have any fresh charge brought against them by justice, the law, or satan; but to be honorably acquitted in the presence of angels and the whole assembled world. Their justification is now recognized publicly. While their works of faith and labors of love to their needy fellow-christians, while here below, are remembered and considered by the Omniscient Judge, as done unto himself; yet they did not expect justification from what they had done; for when Christ mentions

their labors of love, they seem to have forgotten them. This is positive proof that they did not expect salvation from this source. No, Christ is their righteousness, and this is amply sufficient. With a smile He will say, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Having long desired to be near the Lord, they are now bid to come and be with him forever. They are pronounced the blessed of the Father, by a voice that the whole assembled universe shall hear.

But we must also briefly notice the wicked, as we passalong. The Lord represents the boastful reasons of self-righteous persons, by declaring that, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord! Lord! have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?" But they are told, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." Their supposed righteousness, derived from their own works, is now seen to be "as filthy rags," and all in vain do they plead their own works, religious duties and great usefulness, as reasons why they should be admitted into the kingdom of glory. They do not pretend to have done these things by their own strength or natural abilities; for they acknowledge that all was done "in the name" of Jesus, by His authority and assistance. This gives them confidence to say, we have done this and we have done the other. They thought of being admitted to heaven because they had done these things. They did them for that end, but what is the result? These mighty workers are branded as workers of "iniquity," and are thrust down to hell, with all their imaginary goodness and pleas, founded thereon.

But the "poor in spirit," all those who are sensible of their own unworthiness, who "live by faith" in a righteousness imputed, who, from love of God and their fellow-pilgrims, perform deeds of charity, are admitted into the eternal kingdom. Kind reader, be careful how you trust in your own duties for salvation, though of the most splendid kind; for "there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." The world is practicing "many wonderful works" that the Bible, which should be our guide, is silent about; but this will avail them nothing, when called to receive judgement. Nothing but the "righteousness of God" will then procure acquttal; for Christ alone is "the way," and "the life." All lovers of truth are encouraged to abound in duty to God, and in duties of charity to the indigent members of Christ; for he will say to those on his right hand, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

The blessedness of God's people will last for all eternity. Their inheritance is unalienable, their crown unfading, and their kingdom everlasting. Jehovah is their light, their glory, and their "exceeding great reward." Their felicity is as permanent as the divine perfections they adore and enjoy. This makes their state supremely glorious, and constitutes it heaven, with all that the word heaven means. And this is the glorious end of the victorious reign of grace. Grace reigned in providing all the means and in bestowing the blessings that were necessary to its accomplishment. Grace reigned to the complete execution of the noble, the astonishing design, from first to last. Surely, the author of grace should have

the unrivaled honor of all the blessings enjoyed by believers on earth and saints above. Yes, He shall have all the glory in the true churches of Christ below, and among all the triumphant hosts above; for they shall shout grace, grace, unto it!"

Dear reader, you will sometime be called before God's judgement bar. It behooves you to well consider what is the foundation of your hope. A man may be quite zealous and exemplary in many respects and yet perish forever. What then is the reason of your hope? Is it that grace which reigns through the Person and work of Christ? Can you say with the primitive Christians, "We believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved?" Has your faith Christ and His finished work, together with the promise of Him who "can not lie," for its support? You are building hopes for eternity, remember. If you can truthfully answer the above in the affirmative, you are a child of God and heir of His kingdom. Therefore you should watch and pray against the "lusts of the flesh," worldly pleasures and Satan's temptations. Watch against spiritual pride and carnal security. "Learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that you be not unfruitful;" but make nothing of this kind the ground of your hope. To do so would not be to rely on the promise of God and live by faith in Jesus Christ. Remember that you, considered in yourself alone, are a guilty, miserable sinner that deserves to perish. Then look above yourself to Jesus, if you expect salvation from Him. The more you behold "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," the more will you see your own vileness. The more you grow in the knowledge of

sanctification, (or real holiness) the more sensible you will be of your own corruptions and imperfections. You will be more and more convinced that if the gospel did not warrant your dependence on Christ, under the character of a sinner, you would be without hope. You should live under a continual remembrance, that you are still an unworthy, sinful creature, but hope to be accepted of God and freed from every curse, for Christ's sake alone. This will keep you truly humble and drive all pride and arrogance away. "Be sober," and "be vigilant." Be careful that the fruits of gratitude your infinite Benefactor may adorn your whole behavior. Make the holiness and usefulness of the life of Jesus your fair example: copy after that brightest of patterns. Pray often for grace, whereby you may serve Him acceptably with reverence and godly fear. Let your "conversation be in heaven:" for the eyes of God, angels, Satan and men are upon you. Should you fall into sin, your spiritual joys will be impaired, God's name and cause will be reproached, your friends will be grieved and your adversaries will be triumphant. By following in the paths of obedience, you will taste more real delights than all the pleasures of sin can boast, than all the riches of this world, can bestow. Fear to disobey Him whose frown is worse than destruction, and who shall certainly use His chastening rod for your correction. Your stay here is short; try to improve it well. A few more fleeting days and you will enter that unchangeable state to enjoy the full pleasures at God's right hand.

To conclude: From this feeble attempt to illustrate the power and majesty of grace we may learn

that the free favor of God, manifested in our salvation, is a theme so copious and sublime, that all which can be said by the most eloquent preachers; all that can be written by the most accurate and descriptive pens, must come infinitely short of a full display of grace. For the "riches of Christ," "the grace of God," is by man unsearchable.

And now, dear reader, I bid you adieu. while I again wish to apologize for the liberties I have taken with Elder Booth's book; I also ask you, Upon what are you building your hopes for eternity? Is it upon Christ and His work? or upon what you feel able to do? or upon a mixture of the two? Have you ever seen the time, when you wished from your heart (and could say with Job) that your lot had been "as an infant, which never saw light;" and could say with that poor Publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner?" And do you still feel your need, of mercy? If so, we can have fellowship for each other; for to all such this book is dedicated. if you have never felt yourself to be as the "chief of sinners," what right have you to conclude that those who have, are either dishonest or deceived?

Yours in love and hope of salvation through the tender mercies of Jesus Christ,

W. S. CRAIG.



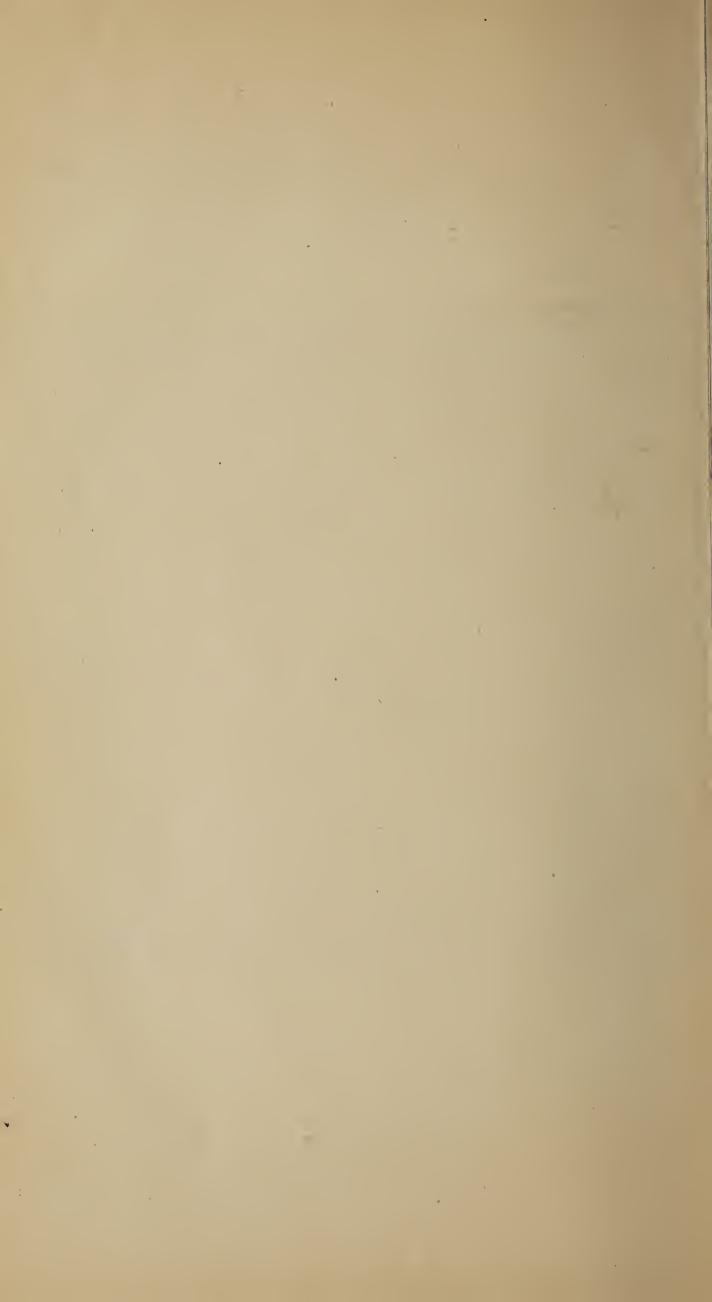
ERRATA.

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PAGE III, LINE 20, read "gratify" for "glorify."
       V,
             . .
                  6.
                            "often" before "do more."
                           "equity" for "equality."
        8,
             6 6
                  4.
        9,
                 12.
                           "assisted" for "arrested."
             6 6
                        6.6
       13,
                  2,
                           "dispensed" for "dispersed."
       15.
                 33,
                           "the" for "sinners."
                        b b
       16,
                           "derided" for "devided."
                  3,
                       66
       17.
                 17,
                           "hath" after "election."
       17.
                 26.
                           "offices" for "officers."
                       6 6
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      22,
                 17.
                           "having" before "endured."
             66
                       66
                           "the" before "most."
      25.
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                 20,
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      27,
                           "him" for "Him."
                 16.
                 30.
      32,
                           "gracious" before "declarations."
                       66
      63.
                11.
                           "penitent" for "saved."
             66
                       66
      82,
                 30,
                           "Christ" before "alone."
                           "though" for "thorough."
      95.
                 21.
                       66
             66
                           "shall" for "must."
      96.
                15,
                       6.6
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There are some mistakes in the use of quotation marks.









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